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The beginnings of
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# THE BEGINNINGS OF CHRISTIANITY.

BY

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# PREFACE.

THE studies and discourses that are herein offered to the public deal with some general conditions of Christian life in the first three centuries of our era. Though already printed, at intervals and amid the pressure of grave academic duties, it is hoped that a certain unity of doctrine, purpose, and interest will not be found wanting to their collection as a series. In one way or another they illustrate certain phases and circumstances of those wonderful centuries before Constantine the Great, when the constitution and the institutions of the new religious society were developing on all sides within the vast Empire of Rome. The teachings of Jesus Christ were the pure, sweet leaven that permeated the decaying and unhappy society of antiquity, saved from its mass of corruption some germs of goodness and truth, of beauty and justice, and strengthened the State against those shocks that would otherwise have reduced it to primæval barbarism. A perennial charm must therefore attach to any narrative of the problems and vicissitudes of this era. This is particularly true of the sufferings of the infant churches, and the social changes their rapid growth could not fail to work in the Roman society that seemed to contain them, but of which,

unknown to it, they were themselves the containing and sustaining soul, according to an admirable saying of the anonymous author of the Letter to Diognetus.

It is not without some diffidence and a clear sense of the shortcomings of these pages that the author commits them to the indulgence of his readers.

At the same time he seizes the occasion to thank the *American Catholic Quarterly Review*, the *Ave Maria*, the *Josephite*, the *Catholic Times*, the *New Century*, and the *Catholic University Bulletin* for the courteous permission to reprint articles that appeared originally in those publications.

THOMAS J. SHAHAN.

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# THE BEGINNINGS OF CHRISTIANITY.

## THE BEGINNINGS OF CHRISTIANITY.

THERE are not wanting reasons of a modern and immediate nature which make it henceforth useful and consoling to reflect on the earliest history of the Church, and in a special manner on the period of her foundation by the apostles and their successors. The nineteenth century saw the almost complete loss of every external advantage that Catholicism had acquired through popular affection and public policy since the days of Constantine. The French Revolution was like a hurricane, after which only the hulk of the "Navicella" floated on the troubled waters of human life. Within one generation the mysteries of several ancient Oriental civilizations have been unveiled with a detail and an accuracy almost beyond belief. Egypt, Babylon, Assyria, and remote India have yielded up with their languages an exten-

sive knowledge of their history and their institutions. The remotest prehistory of the peoples of Europe has been laid bare, and in the process have arisen noble sciences like philology, anthropology, and ethnology. Scholarly travel has chosen for its special object the rudest embryonic beginnings of human culture in every zone and clime. Thus we find ourselves in presence of an historical temper of mind that is very general, and whose first query is the natural and salutary one concerning the origin of things. Epochs of humanity, like the stages of the earth's growth, have each their own *cachet*. In a critical and creative age, with so little left of the simple unquestioning habit of faith, it was impossible that the origin of so vast an institution as Christianity should not engage the attention of a multitude of students. It was impossible, too, that there should not follow a great diversity of views and opinions according as bias, heredity, prejudice, human weakness, or insufficient knowledge affected the mind of the historical critic.

The soil of Rome, long neglected, has given up a multitude of monuments of a primitive Christian society that goes back without question to the years that immediately followed Christ's death. And the interpretation of these wonderful remnants of an early Christian community has again called the at-

tention of scholars and travellers to the first days of that same society when it was spreading, silently but rapidly, through every ward of the Mediterranean cosmopolis, and even beyond, into lands where the speech and the writ of Rome did not run.

Then, too, the steady, consistent disintegration of the original bases of Protestantism, and the infinite discussion which that process has called up regarding the books of the New Testament and the primitive elements of Christian faith, have not failed to bring into evidence the teachings, the works, and the writings of many apostolic men, and to place before the eye of the imagination the fields in which they labored. No doubt, the application to the science of history of the methods of the study of the natural sciences has largely furthered this remarkable movement. But many will believe that the incredible resurrection of the Catholic Church within this century, and especially her growth in North America, are to be counted appreciable motives in the awakening of curiosity as to the first establishment of Christianity in the Old World. Nor must we omit the far-reaching influence of certain sociological teachings that contravene Christianity, plainly deny or eliminate its essential principles, criticise its economico-social history, and thereby lay the axe at the root of our modern society, which still presupposes as basic

and organic no few Christian principles, beliefs, institutions, and habits of thought.

Neither the sixteenth nor the eighteenth century fulfilled the brilliant academic promises of "felicitas" that each made to mankind. What they offered as final theology and final philosophy has fallen into the same moral bankruptcy that Mr. Mallock and M. Brunetière are now predicting of dogmatic Protestantism and the self-sufficiency of the natural sciences. The result is a certain not unnatural reaction in favor of that aged and universal institution which has been the mother and the nurse of all modern societies, and which still goes on its beneficent way, with the same sure power, the same generous bestowal of peace and joy, of rest and consolation, of private and public weal, in every society where it is left free to display its mandate as the representative of Jesus Christ. Hence the cries of disappointment which so multiply on all sides, disappointment with the preposterous claims of mere knowledge as the power of salvation, with the transient victories of false and misleading philosophies, with the earth as a sufficient abiding-place for man. The very absolutism and arrogance of such contentions have led to the quick demonstration of their emptiness or insufficiency—they were like leaky cisterns or broken reeds, useless in the hour of need, or like those desert apparitions

that promise water and shade and cool breezes, but in reality offer to the parched traveller only the same flaming horizon, the same dreary waste of sand as before. And in proportion as this temper of disappointment spreads and finds expression, so must increase respect and admiration for the Catholic Church, which, alone of human institutions, has never been blown about by every gust of doctrine, since she possesses in herself the needed ballast of conviction, a sure criterion of what is true, useful, permanent, adaptable, and assimilable in the general experience of mankind.

For such and similar reasons the story of her foundation and first growth will always have a profound human interest and value. There can be nothing more worthy of attention than the little band of apostles as they confront the *orbis terrarum*—the Græco-Roman world. Nor can there be anything more instructive and consoling than to learn by what means and against what odds their immediate successors planted the Christian society in every corner of that ancient world; by what a combination of public and private force this purely spiritual society was opposed; how it flourished in itself and developed organically its constitution, despite all obstacles from within and without; finally, how it shattered or survived every opposition, sat coequal upon the throne

of the Cæsars and divided with them the allegiance of mankind.

## I.

When the apostles went forth to teach all nations the doctrine of the crucified Jesus, nearly all earthly power was possessed by the City of Rome. In the course of eight hundred years she had grown from a little stone fort on the Palatine to the most powerful and perfect state the world has yet seen. From the Atlantic to the Euphrates, from the Rhine and the Danube to the Cataracts of the Nile, her will was supreme; and if she recognized these limits, it was because beyond them there was little worth fighting for. Step by step, piecemeal, she had put together this *massa imperii*, subduing first the little towns in the surrounding plains and hills, and then breaking in turn the power of Macedonia and Carthage, of Mediterranean Asia and Parthia, of Northern Africa and Egypt, until there remained but one symbol of universal dominion—the Eagles of Rome; one supreme owner of the habitable earth and arbiter of civilized mankind—the Roman people. By centuries of self-sacrifice and endurance, by prodigies of patience and wisdom, by a rock-like confidence in their city, by a kind of kenosis of self in favor of the common weal, by frugality and foresight, these shep-

herds, herders, vintners, and kitchen-gardeners made themselves heirs of the vast immemorial Oriental despotisms of Egypt, Assyria, and Parthia, with a hundred minor kingdoms. The same virtues made them the masters of Gaul, Spain, and Britain, i.e., of the most fertile soil of Europe and of the two great rivers that almost bind the Black Sea to the Atlantic—the Rhine and the Danube. All the golden streams of the world's commerce flowed now to one political centre, bearing Romeward with equal thoroughness all the confluents of art, literature, and luxury. The glorious dreams of Alexander the Great were translated into realities when Roman "Conquistadori" sat at Antioch, Alexandria, Carthage, Saragossa, Lyons, and York. In the eventful struggle for the Mediterranean that began with the Great Persian War the first epoch was fittingly closed by the defeat of the Orient and the creation of a self-conscious Occident. But scarcely had the City of Rome enslaved the universal earth when the chains of her own slavery were forged at her own hearth. The noise of falling kingdoms alternates with the uproar of civil discord during the century that precedes the birth of Christ, and when these ever-memorable conflicts are over, the power of Cæsar is securely anchored. All the reins of empire are in the hands of the young Octavius. For a while Cæsar will call himself only

*princeps*, the foremost citizen of the city; for a while the Senate holds a formal but unsubstantial equality. All the great magistracies of the City are centred now in Cæsar and his heirs. The scarred legions of a hundred battle-fields are his; his the richest provinces, uncontrolled revenues and fleets; his, too, the legislative power, since the servile Senate no longer dares to refuse registration of every desire or suggestion of Cæsar. Wearied of self-government, with every enemy prostrate, at the acme of her glory and power, Rome abandoned all to the hands of one man, made perpetual and irrevocable that dictatorship to which in the past she had occasionally, but only occasionally, entrusted her supreme interests. The world, governed directly and immediately by Rome, reacted in turn upon the proud City, and where once a race of sturdy Italian freemen administered an humble commonwealth upon ancestral soil, there arose a new cosmopolitan government in which all the passions, vices, and interests of the captive world had a growing share.

"Graecia capta ferum victorem coepit."

Flattery and corruption, ambition and hatred and envy, stood guard around the imperial throne. The polished and conscienceless Greek, the frivolous and boastful Gaul, the debauched Syrian, an almost

nameless body of ex-slaves, were the true rulers of the world. The original Roman people had in great part made way for them, being cut off in long foreign wars, greatly decimated in the civil struggles that brought about the fall of the Republic, or hopelessly confounded with the descendants of those captives and foreigners that Rome had been absorbing during more than a century of universal conquest.

But the City in turn fascinated all who came in contact with her. She lifted men to her own high level. Those born to hate her became her humble slaves, ready to die for one whom the world now called the Golden City, the City Eternal, the Royal Queen, to whose "Genius" all the deities of all the races had done homage, and whose astounding "Fortune" dominated the imagination of all. Indeed, well might they call her the Golden City, the City Eternal! The stranger who entered her gates walked entranced through long rows of marble palaces, the happy homes of victorious generals, powerful lawyers, merchant-princes, when they were not hired out to a mob of Oriental kings and potentates. Splendid porticoes, temples, and baths dotted the City, and her public squares or fora were filled with forests of statues. Masterpieces of art and the curios of all past or conquered civilizations were to be seen at every turn—the fruits of foreign skill, or rather of

a long robbery of the world, carried on with iron persistency for centuries. If this Rome was the abode of an army of spies and informers, she was also the home of literature and art and general human culture, such an abode as no city has ever been; for the relations of London to England, or Paris to France, express but feebly the intellectual supremacy of the City in the palmy days of her greatness. Within her walls she sheltered perhaps a million and a half of people, but her empire was over two thousand miles long and over three thousand miles broad, with a calculated population of one hundred to one hundred and twenty millions, and a subdued and docile territory in extent somewhat more than one-half that of the United States before 1870.

One may well wonder how this huge mass of empire, made up so late, by force, out of so much wreckage of nations, states, and races, could be governed with success. Rome was not a victorious nation, but a victorious city, and where she could she introduced her own municipal institutions, admirably fitted, as a rule, to the local circumstances of antique life. Then she was no doctrinaire, and where the native fierceness or raw simplicity of the vanquished forbade her usual policy, she governed them in a way suited to their temper and her real power. Her provinces were usually complexus of cities, each

responsible for its own *suburbium*, and in each province the chief Roman magistrate, whatever his title, wielded the entire power of Rome, civil and military. He governed immediately and directly in the interests of the City, which looked on the whole world as the "farm of the Roman people," precisely as any subject city of hers looked on its suburban territory. These interests demanded peace and prudent administration of the sources of revenue; hence the increase of population and of the general welfare of the great provinces in the century or two that followed the birth of Christ. From the Golden Milestone in the very heart of Rome there branched out to the ends of her empire a huge network of communication, great roads paved with basaltic or lava blocks, some remnants of which yet remain and show the deep ruts of the chariot-wheels or the heavy trucks that for centuries rattled over them, bearing countless thousands on purposes of state or commerce or curiosity, or transferring war material and the rare products of the far Orient. The government post and a system of inns completed the means of transit, which was so perfect that only in our own day has it been surpassed by the discovery of the uses of steam. All this, however, was subservient to one paramount influence for unity—the Greek tongue. While the Roman kept the Latin for the use of camp and law,

of administration and commerce, he adopted the Greek as the vehicle of polite intercourse. For three or four centuries it had been the language of authority in the Orient and of refinement everywhere. Even the Jews had submitted to its charm, and outside of Judæa, in Greek lands at least, preached the Law of Moses in the accents of Homer.

The final result of such conditions could only be the gradual extinction of all national peculiarities—the chief object of Rome, or rather of the Cæsars, who aimed henceforth at a general world-citizenship, an organization of humanity under the benign direction of that City which the gods, or fate, or her own fortune and power had made supremely responsible for the welfare of men. Velleities of national independence were crushed out, as at Jerusalem, and anomalies of national religions, like the Druids, were sternly and thoroughly suppressed. The worship of the imperial "Genius" and the general acceptance of the Roman jurisprudence, with its uniform and almost mathematical equity, helped on this process of assimilation. And when we remember the colonization *en masse* of abandoned or ruined cities, the generous extension of the Roman citizenship, the cementing action of commerce, and the levelling influence of the legions, we cease to wonder that before Jesus Christ was born, politically the low places were

filled up, the high mountains laid low, and the social ground made ready for a new city—the city of Man or the city of God, that was the problem of the future. The Peloponnesian War had wiped out all difference between Dorian and Ionian. The campaigns of Alexander had opened the Orient to Greek culture, and hellenized the enormous basin of the Mediterranean as well as the great pathways to the Orient. The last act in the preparation of that political unity which facilitated the success of the Gospel was the one that placed all earthly power in the hands of Rome. It was the end and acme of state-building in antiquity, and furnished the needed basis for the sublime social and religious revolution then at hand.

How slow and uncertain might have been the spread of the Christian religion if its apostles had been obliged at every step to deal with new governments, new prejudices, new languages! Hence the Christian Fathers saw in the splendid unity of the empire something providential and divine. The elder Pliny might imagine that this unity was the work of the gods bestowing polite intercourse and civilization on all mankind, but Christian writers like Origen (contra Celsum, II. 30) and Prudentius (contra Symmachum, II. 609) saw in it the removal of the most difficult obstacles to the propagation of Christianity, viz., the diversity of language and the destruction of national

barriers. When St. Paul tells us (Rom. x. 18): "Verily their sound hath gone forth into all the earth, and their words unto the ends of the whole world," he expresses a fact which the Christian society has always looked upon as an historical marvel, a *prima facie* evidence of the innate truth and charm of the apostolic preaching. In his apology against Celsus the erudite Origen appeals to the character of the apostles and to their circumstances as in itself a strong proof of the divine origin of Christianity.

A few poor fishermen, rustic and unlettered, go forth at the bidding of one of their countrymen to conquer for him, not the temporal authority, but, what is much more difficult, the spiritual mastery of this great Roman world! They are but a handful, and Jews at that, whom the masters of Roman literature delight in depicting as the most contemptible in the Roman state. They are of the lowest in a world where birth and wealth are everything, and they were born and bred in a remote and mountainous region, where those schemes of ambition that are easily nourished in great cities could scarcely suggest themselves to men. Their Master had died a felon's death, and they themselves had abandoned Him in the supreme hour, having hoped to the last that He would revive a temporal kingdom of Israel.

Yet suddenly they are filled with a boundless en-

thusiasm. The apparitions of Jesus have transformed them from rude Galilean fishermen into eloquent apostles of a universal religion. The men who could not watch an hour with their divine Master, much less withstand the taunts of the angry mob, are now fearless before the supreme council of their own national priesthood and boldly proclaim the basic principle of the new dispensation: "It is better to obey God than men." Their discourse is strangely effective; hundreds and then thousands are carried away by it, and give up all to follow men whom but a brief while ago they passed without notice in the streets of Jerusalem. Severe persecution only strengthens them in their convictions, and before they are forced to flee the city they have converted to the society of Jesus Christ no insignificant number of the national clergy itself. Their speech and their counsel, when obliged to face great problems affecting immediately the future of this society of Christ, are stamped with a rare wisdom. In the days of transition from the old to the new, while the synagogue, in the words of St. Augustine, was breathing its last, they behaved towards it with piety and with that rare precision of tact and good sense that usually mark men of experience and judgment. The Acts tell us but little of those few years in which the apostles were founding the Church of Jerusalem, but what

they reveal shows us men utterly different from the timid and doubting disciples whom Jesus led about in His lifetime, and whose rusticity and worldliness shine out so plainly in the gospels. But now they are men who have seen the risen Jesus in His glory, conversed with Him, been filled with His grace, and shared in the effusion of His holy spirit on the Day of Pentecost.

The hour comes when they must quit the Holy City and go out into a world they know not and which knows not them. Was it a light or indifferent thing for a Jew to abandon the Temple, which held all that he reputed dear and sacred? The oracles of God were there, and the pledges of His promises. There, too, were the solemn feasts of the only true religion upon earth ere the fulfilment of the prophecies. Thither came yearly from the ends of the world a multitude of Jews, to adore God after the consoling manner of their fathers. Its white walls and golden roofs shone afar from Moriah and gladdened the eyes of the weary pilgrim when they did not shine before his imagination. So deep were the roots which this extraordinary edifice had cast in the hearts of the chosen people that since its destruction, in spite of their sad vicissitudes, they have never ceased to weep bitter tears on the Friday of every week over the few remaining stones of its once proud walls. But these men of

Galilee, with never a spark of Gentile sympathies or Hellenism in their hearts, with no natural love for the cruel and oppressive eagles of Rome, go out forever from the one corner of earth that is dear to them, the sepulchres of their fathers, the homes of their families, the sites of the Resurrection and the Judgment, out into endless conflict and incalculable sufferings, out into a world of odious and repulsive idolatry. It was a sublime act of daring, and whoever reflects that neither before nor since has the like been seen will not wonder that Christians have been prone from the beginning to surround this step with due veneration. Thereby the religion of Christ was carried beyond the boundaries of the Jewish state, and preached throughout the vast empire of Rome as the complement and perfection of Judaism, the alone-saving truth, the divine balm of doubt and spiritual unrest, and the saving ointment for a corrupting society. Soon wonderful missionaries are joined to the apostles—Barnabas and John, Marcus the Evangelist and Philip; married couples, too, like Andronicus and Junias, Aquila and Prisca; and in an incredibly brief time the crucified and risen Jesus has been preached on the fertile plains between the Euphrates and the Tigris, throughout the valleys and the tablelands of Syria and Asia Minor. His doctrine is known in the Delta of the Nile and up the great river in Ethiopia, in the

African oasis of Cyrene and in the island of Cyprus, in Spain and Gaul, and finally at Rome, where it was probably carried quicker than to any other site on earth. The bitterest enemy of the Christians, Saul, is converted by Jesus Himself, and made a vessel of election, thereby furnishing in one famous and superior person to the first feeble communities an irresistible evidence of the truth and the power of their faith. If not many great and noble according to the world belong to this doctrine that is gainsaid everywhere, still men and women from every class of society are represented—those of Cæsar's household; the proconsul of Cyprus, Sergius Paulus; the noble women of Beroea; the principal women of Thessalonica; Lydia, the seller of purple in Thyatira; the physician Luke; the scholar Apollo; Dionysius, a judge of the Athenian Areopagus, as well as the nameless multitude who joined it in all the jewries that stretched from the Tigris to the Tagus.

It is in vain that misguided men question the authority of the Acts of the Apostles, whence we learn the first conquests of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. From one extravagant opinion to another they have been obliged to recede, until to-day what passes for enlightened criticism recognizes the general trustworthiness of this fascinating narrative. Its absolute reliability has never been doubted by a much

greater authority, the Catholic Church, to which we owe the tradition of the text, and which is herself contemporaneous with the work. Even Renan, so ready to diminish or offset the analogies and the germs of the Church's constitution, cannot deny that the hand of St. Luke is visible in the book, that "its view of the yet brief history of the Christian society is that of the official historians of the Court of Rome." It was read in the infant churches, which were not made up of inexperienced men of one race fixed to the soil, but were rather formed from a hundred nationalities, with a large proportion of Hellenistic Jews. These men were capable, by their tongue, their origin, and their personal experience, of detecting any imposture foisted upon them, if only by comparison with the numerous texts of this work circulated in the East and the West long before the end of the first century. St. John the Apostle was still alive, and to be consulted in Ephesus, or in any of the original sees of Asia Minor which he founded and nourished with special love.

It will not do to sneer at the Grecized Jews, at their archaic Macedonian dialect, or their uncouth pronunciation. Some remnants of inscriptions do not betray the culture of a numerous class, and long before the time of Christ there were Jews like the one whom Aristotle knew, Hellenes in all but blood.

The Asmonæan and Herodian families were often Greek at heart, and hundreds of such men were among the first disciples of the apostles. Could not the churches that produced St. Clement and the Areopagite, St. Ignatius of Antioch and St. Justin, recognize a literary fraud that must have been attempted on an enormous scale? Or was that age so devoid of criticism to which we owe those perfect editions of the texts of Homer and Vergil, and so many other Greek and Latin classics, which modern scholarship aims at reproducing? Or were there wanting ripe scholars in the earliest Christian communities, men of standing and influence not unlike the Jew Philo, and that other Jew Josephus? Were not Apollo and Mark men of the rarest eloquence, the true propagandists, according to Renan? Could a confused and misleading story of the origin of the Church and their own share in it have easily obtained absolute currency during their lifetime and in their own communities, and leave behind no trace of the disturbances it necessarily created? Truly, the contradictions that follow the denial of the credibility of the Acts are so much greater than those supposed to arise from the ancient and universal belief, that we may safely wait until we are dispossessed by some arguments known to the law or the equity of unbiassed literary criticism.

## II.

What could it be that so charged the hearts of the apostles with unheard-of vigor and energy? What was the source of that calm, unchanging joy which shines from the pages of the genuine history and correspondence of the infant society? It was a colossal faith in the person of Jesus Christ and His works, His life, His doctrine, and His promises—no mere admiration of His conduct, no vague, undefined velleity of a remote imitation, no simple confidence in His power, sanctity, and future coming. It was a *faith with an objective content*, whose main elements and outlines are clearly set forth in the genuine writings of the apostles, faith in their mission by Him whom they never tired of preaching, faith in the fidelity of His support and His ultimate victory, faith in the specific purpose of a society they were sent to "found and to establish" in the words of the most ancient Christian writers, i.e., to organize as a self-propagating and self-preserving entity, in order to hand down to remotest times the history, doctrine, and authority of Jesus Christ. The apostles were no vapid dreamers, but men of action—elevated and transfigured, indeed, but with clear and fixed purposes that culminated in the establishment of a universal religious association. Hence in the New Testament one sees

them everywhere, travelling, preaching, organizing little knots and bands of believers—an activity so marked that their immediate disciple, Clement of Rome, recalls it as their chief occupation. This stupendous faith found expression in a *personal devotion to Jesus Christ* that ravished all souls and filled heart-weary multitudes with a presentiment of spiritual peace and refreshment to be had at the same source. The Temple of Janus was shut, it is true, but the external peace of Rome covered much mental commotion. "O Cæsar, in thy peace what things I suffer!" cries Epictetus. The minor political arenas of the world were closed, that mankind might for once watch the splendid game of world-government as conducted on a suitable scale upon the few acres of marly soil that spread on either side of the Tiber. The gods of the nations were without prestige, for they had not been able to hold their own against the fortune of Rome. The great philosophies offered consolation, as philosophy always does, but to a chosen few only, and in an insufficient way. The superb art of Greece had taken the road of exile. Henceforth it can only imitate—it will create no more. The sources of its inspiration are dried up; there is no longer in it any power of consecration. It is no longer a spiritual strength or a religious consolation, for the popular faith on which it stood has universally

collapsed. The feeling of the powerful and opulent can be guessed from the bitter words of their chief writer, Tacitus, that man is the wretched toy of an insolent fate. The outlook of the statesman was so disheartening that Tiberius congratulated the Senate on the disruption of the Germanic Confederation of Maroboduus as an event of greater import than the Athenian defeat of Philip, or the Roman victories over Pyrrhus or Antiochus. On this sated and wearied world the preaching of the apostles and their disciples made a vivid impression, with its assertion of a new kingdom and a new ruler in the yet unconquered province of the human heart. The eloquent universal praise and the steadfast adoration of this new personality, the great deeds done in His name, the assertion of His eternal kingship, the adhesion in every city of miscellaneous multitudes, convinced new multitudes that the person of Jesus was divine and worthy of all the devotion bestowed upon it. It was the intensity and eloquence of this devotion in St. Paul that nearly persuaded King Agrippa to become a Christian. In many a later persecution it was the personal devotion of the martyrs to Jesus Christ that moved the onlooking pagans to consider what manner of person He might be for whom men so joyfully laid down their lives. Who can read the letters of St. Ignatius of Antioch, especially that to the Romans,

without being moved by the fine exalted mysticism of his speech, without feeling that a new and irresistible passion, the *personal love of God for man and man for God,* has been introduced among men, and that, like an atmosphere or a perfume, it must soon transform the hearts of all who admit it, and eventually renew from within every society in which its believers multiply?

The *personal memories of Jesus* worked marvels in the hearts of the apostles. To believe this we do not need to recall the old tradition that the cheeks of Peter were furrowed by the tears that he shed when he recalled that divinely sad glance of Jesus. We do not need to recollect that Christ vouchsafed a personal apparition to St. Paul, as though this grace were needed to make him an equal apostle with the others. How could they ever forget the incomparable Master and Teacher with whom they had so long dwelt in sweet intimacy? They knew now that it was God Himself with whom they had crossed the hills of Galilee, who had walked with them through its valleys and its villages, who had sailed with poor fishing folk in their humble boats on Genesareth. With the compelling magic of affection they recalled surely His mien, His gestures, His gait, His sweet gravity, the liquid eyes, twin homes of love and sorrow, and that familiar speech that was wont to light in the heart of

every listener a flame of faith and love. He went about doing good, He spoke as one having power, grace was about Him as an atmosphere—how could the apostles fail to renew in those divinely efficient memories their hearts sore-tried in the multitudinous conflict that they were directing? What is like unto memory? It is like the sword that reaches the innermost divisions of the soul, and pierces us in the remotest of our spiritual fortresses. Or again it is like the wings of the morning on which we may fly from all that is little and vile and hemming, and rest in the bosom of God Himself. The true sphere of man is himself, not the world about him, and his true wealth or poverty is the memories of the past, with their sweetness or their horror. Jesus knew that the memory of Himself would be for all time the most potent confirmation of faith. So He established on the last night of His earthly life a simple rite, a frugal meal or banquet, fixing Himself its essentials. This He left not only to His apostles, but especially to all those who in future ages would heed their call and join themselves to His kingdom. Thus He focussed upon His person forever the attention of all mankind in that mystic moment when divine love emptied itself for love of man, and human hate outdid itself in the death of the God-Man. We can see from the earliest documents of Christianity that this mystic

banquet was the great driving heart of the society, its vivifying sun, the secret of its inexhaustible strength. The little house-churches of Jerusalem, the upper chambers where the brethren met to break bread, the descriptions of such banquets in St. Paul, the confession of the Christian deaconesses to the Younger Pliny, the pages of the earliest Christian writers, the numerous old frescoes of the Christian catacombs at Rome, and a long series of other indications, show that here was the chief source of the apostolic energy, here Jesus dwelt forever among them. The momentary transfiguration on Thabor, seen by a few only, was now the daily joy of all, replete with infinite personal revelations, illuminations, and suggestions, to them who had known Him in the flesh.

While the effusion of the Holy Spirit on Pentecost confirmed in an extraordinary degree the faith of the infant Church, it brought to the apostles and disciples a number of *charismatic gifts*, special graces given to them as public teachers, for the more rapid attainment of a certain external growth, efficiency, and organic consistency in the new religion. God withdrew before their discourse the barrier of differing tongues and idioms. They enjoy the gifts of prophecy and miracles, especially of healing and of exorcism of evil spirits, and in their exercise of these high

gifts we see a prudence and a practical beneficence which resembles the conduct of Jesus.

Another element of the apostolic success is their *incomparable enthusiasm.* There is a natural contagion in the mere expression of overpowering conviction, and the annals of eloquence teem with examples of multitudes, even nations, yielding obedience to the flaming words of some Demosthenes or Hortensius, some St. Bernard or Peter the Hermit. But the apostolic enthusiasm was no mere trick of human eloquence, for they tell us themselves that they spoke not in the persuasive words of human speech. In an age of finical perfection of language their discourse was doubtless rude and unadorned. Their tongues betrayed their origin as Peter's did his, and their Jewish profiles would not tempt many to expect from them a philosophy of salvation. The enthusiasm of the apostles was something different; it was the steady flame of pure faith and love running out in absolute, uncalculating devotion. We all know the mental habit of men who have devoted themselves to one purpose and who pursue it without ceasing or wavering. They may walk in the shadow forever, but an interior light illumines their souls and transfigures and sanctifies the object of their endeavors, be it some mystery of philosophy, or art, or human science, some wrong to avenge, some justice to be

obtained. Leonardo da Vinci walking the streets of Milan for his head of Christ, Bernard Palissy casting to the flames the furniture of his poor workshop as a last holocaust to his fleeting dream of beauty, Columbus following his glorious ideal from one rebuff to another, are familiar examples of this highest and most efficient state of the heart, in which it overleaps the poor barriers of space and time, lays hold by anticipation of the cherished object, lives with it and for it, and compels the astonished body, like a sturdy slave, to outdo itself in endurance and sacrifice. Such was the mental temper of the apostles, only immeasurably higher in degree, as much as divine faith surpasses human confidence. They knew whom they were serving, and through what an unspeakable tragedy they were missionaries on the great highways of the East and the West. They walked forever in the shadow of Calvary, and their ears were forever haunted by the parting accents of their Master: "Going therefore, teach all nations."

Henceforth no scorn shall chill their resolution, no apathy or dulness dim their courage. The world lay before them, its first great spiritual conquerors, sunk in the shadows of idolatry, with only here and there a point of light, the little jewries scattered over the Roman Empire and beyond, and those few chosen Gentile souls who were true to the law of nature and

the impulses of the Holy Spirit. Before their generation was over, this world had recognized the kingship of Jesus Christ, and a peaceful revolution had been accomplished, the immensity of whose import no one could yet fathom, but which rightly forms the division-line between the Old World and the New, between an imperfect and stumbling humanity in which the animal element was supreme and a humanity awakened, self-conscious, transmuted, in which the spirit was henceforth dominant, and which had henceforth its universal ideal, realized, living, eternal, tangible, attainable, enjoyable, in the person of its Mediator and its Saviour, Jesus Christ.

Indeed, the world was ready for their message of salvation. It was no savage or semi-cultured epoch into which Christianity was born, but one of elegant civilization, perfect in all the appointments of speech, literature, art, communication and administration. It was an enlightened age, and the most progressive materially that has preceded our own. It was curious, critical, sceptical, with a view over the world of man and nature such as had not yet been reached. And having touched the summit of external power, this age began to turn inward upon itself, and to ask itself the meaning of life and death, of man and things, of the real uses of victory and defeat, of truth and goodness and beauty. The writers of the time

show that many looked to the Orient and especially to Judæa for a Saviour, so powerful had been the Old Testament propaganda in the basin of the Mediterranean. The Sibyls, those strange intermediaries between Jew and Gentile, sang of an approaching age of gold, of an immortal reign of justice, of a Virgin and a celestial Child who were to be the authors of all future happiness. The popular philosophy, Stoicism, was of Oriental origin and borrowed much of its practical value from Semitic ethics. The eyes of the world were fixed on Judæa, if only because its mountains were the last refuge of ancient national liberty, and men were selling dearly on those sacred hills the great jewel of personal and religious freedom. The theology and the ethics of Israel were making proselytes among heart-weary men and women in every city and in every class of society. A general spirit of unrest pervaded mankind, the result of excessive public materialism unbalanced by any extra-mundane tendencies, and of a shattered faith in national and municipal gods. An undefined but aching sense of sin, a wild inarticulate cry for personal redemption, the individual need of expiation and internal purification, were borne in on every breath from the Orient. There is a deep significance in the old legend that at the hour of Christ's agony certain mariners on the Mediterranean heard, borne

on the blast, the cry: "Great Pan is dead." The ancient travesties of religion typified by the Greek nature-god called Pan had, indeed, finished their long career of failure and despair, and we may well repeat the fine lines of the modern poet:

"Earth outgrows the mystic fancies
Sung beside her in her youth,
And those debonair romances
Sound but dull beside the truth.
Phoebus' chariot-course is run;
Look up, poets, to the sun:
Pan, Pan is dead.

"Christ hath sent us down the angels,
And the whole earth and the skies
Are illumed by altar-candles
Lit for blessed mysteries;
And a priest's hand through creation
Waveth calm and consecration;
And Pan is dead."

But if the victory of the apostles was rapid, it was not therefore entirely natural. It was far from being an easy evolution of a cosmopolitan tendency. The final establishment of the Christian society met with superhuman obstacles, so great and varied that they more than offset the circumstances that favored it. The Christian Church has always taught that her original victories constituted a moral miracle sufficient to compel the attention of every seeker after truth, and to force them to look into her claims.

## III.

Within a hundred years after the death of Christ His religion might rightly be called a universal one. It had spread widely toward the Orient, crossed the Jordan, was flourishing in the great commercial cities of Syria and out on the great Syrian steppe. It had penetrated into Persia and away beyond, into remotest India. Trustworthy evidence shows that there were few Jewish communities into which the name and history of Christ had not gone, and the Jews since the last captivity were settled throughout the entire Orient. It was strong enough in Alexandria to draw the attention of the Emperor Hadrian on his visit to that city, in the early part of the second century, and it was quickly carried over the entire Delta and along the great river, not only among the Græco-Romans, but also among the Old-Coptic villagers who intermingled with their masters. From golden Antioch it radiated throughout northern Syria, followed all the roads of commerce that branched from there to the Caspian, up into the mountainous tablelands of Armenia, across the mighty snow-crowned ridges of the Taurus into Cappadocia, Galatia, Bithynia, and along the northern and southern coasts of Asia Minor. Peter and Paul, Barnabas and Mark, Timothy and John, had gone

over all these great highways and sowed the good seed in their day. Every Christian community sent out in turn its swarms of nameless missionaries, who penetrated the remotest valleys and climbed into the most inaccessible regions.

Throughout the first and second centuries of Christianity there is observable a universal propaganda that transports Christian men and women in all directions and makes use of the political unity to organize and secure the unity of faith. Who can read unmoved the letters of St. Ignatius of Antioch to the Christian communities of Asia Minor and Rome? What a picture they show of widespread Christianity, with identical government and faith! And the pages of the Church historian Eusebius show us the same conditions throughout all Asia Minor in the following century, i.e., before the year 200 A.D.: bishops preaching, travelling, holding synods, discussing with pagans, Jews, and heretics. Within the last decade we have found the curious tombstone of one of these old missionary bishops, Abercius of Hieropolis, a city of Phrygia. Its inscription, prepared by himself, shows a man who had travelled the world from the Tiber to the Tigris in the interests of Christianity, and who rejoiced that he had found among all these brethren no other faith than that of St. Paul. This army of missionaries was yet needed, and we

know that they possessed for long decades no small share of the charismatic gifts of the apostolic period.

In the West the churches of southern Italy received the faith of Christ at a very early date, being really a portion of the Greek world by language, institutions, and traditions. Its progress was slower in northern Italy, but within the apostolic times it had surely made some headway in Gaul, or what is known as southern France, in Spain, and the islands of the Mediterranean. Long before the end of the second century it was firmly established in northern Africa, and by the year 200 A.D. there was scarcely a prominent city in the Mediterranean world that did not have its Christian bishop with a clergy and a flourishing community. This was done without any human aid, in spite of every human hindrance, by the purely peaceful means of preaching and example. They had few writers and they depended little on the written page. One of the greatest of the first Christian missionaries, St. Irenæus of Lyons, tells us that the barbarian Kelts and Britons had the law of Jesus written on their hearts without paper or ink. They had the Christian Scriptures, no doubt, and venerated them, but they knew that the true guarantor of faith was the apostolic office and succession, that there alone could be found the criterion that enables men easily to distinguish among the claims of a hundred

sects the original doctrine of Jesus. For that reason they kept with care the list of the apostolic churches, and consulted them in cases of need or doubt, and especially the Church of Rome, whose episcopal succession is the oldest and surest that we have, and was made out with great care, before SS. Peter and Paul were a hundred years dead, by St. Irenæus of Lyons and by Hegesippus, a Palestinian traveller. In other words, the first list of the bishops of Rome was not made out by Roman Christians, who knew it too well, but by a Greek Asiatic and a Jew, who felt its need as the sure and sufficient pledge of the maintenance of the Catholic doctrine.

If the Christian missionaries could move easily from one place to another, and could find men and women speaking a common tongue—the Greek,—they had not therefore converted them. In the great cities, as in the rural districts, among the most refined populations as well as among the semi-barbarians of the empire, they found two great sources of almost insuperable obstacles—the social order and the religious condition. These obstacles they overcame before their death, and it is this victory which Christians call a moral miracle of the highest order. The conduct of the greatest intellectual adversaries of Christianity is in itself an indirect proof that its first propagation throughout the world was, morally speaking, an event

that transcended all human experience and analogy. These exacting critics leave nothing undone to transform the great victory of Jesus Christ over the Græco-Roman world into the stages of a natural and easy evolution in which every circumstance favors the Christian cause and operates equally to the detriment of the pagan religion and society.

Foremost among them is Edward Gibbon, the mirror of the philosophic irreligion of the eighteenth century, an arrogant and splenetic man who spurned the saving gift of faith, and consumed talent of the very highest order in the service of a shallow scepticism. For him Christianity is a phenomenon to be explained by a brief catalogue of natural situations and contemporary advantages. He ignores habitually or minimizes the true issue. With a constant uncharity he attributes or suggests motives that really exist only in his own imagination or heart. He lifts by the potent magic of words the secondary to the plane of the principal, and gives to the transitory or local or accidental in Christianity the supreme responsible rôle of a principal or an efficient cause. He emphasizes with the delicate patient care of a miniaturist every detail favorable to his own contentions, and cloaks in rhetorical silence whatever would reduce their value. By this long unbroken process of caricature he has given to the world an account of the

first Christian ages that is a compound of rhetorical minimism, exaggeration, and distortion. In it every paragraph is charged with infinite injustice. These literary wrongs are often, of course, very delicate and elusive. The whole picture of primitive Christianity as drawn by Gibbon is about as like the original facts as the misshapen Caliban was like the fairy nymph Ariel. There is in this extraordinary man something of Milton's graceful and humane Belial:

> "He seemed
> For dignity composed and high exploit;
> But all was false and hollow; though his tongue
> Dropped manna and could make the worse appear
> The better reason."

He is the most expert special pleader known at the bar of history, owing to his enormous reading and maliciously retentive memory, his fine rare skill in summarizing, his unequalled architectonic talent in disposing his materials, and the supreme gift of a rhetoric at once solemnly and finically gorgeous. He climbs the cathedra of history and thunders therefrom like an Egyptian priest reciting the good and evil deeds of some dead Pharaoh. He is a compound of Rhadamanthus and Momus, foremost master of that dread art of satire which is often only the expression of pride and hate, rather than of justice or equity. He "sapp'd a solemn creed with solemn sneer" at an unfortunate psychological moment when it lay hum-

bled in the dust by an astounding series of causes. But he is frequently inexact and careless in statements, as every new edition of his work shows. He is incurably afflicted with a cheap and flippant rationalism that runs always, animal-like, *terre-à-terre,* and can see nothing noble, divine, providential in the world's history. He has outlived Voltaire because he was graver and deeper than that protagonist; but he belongs to the same school that stubbornly weaves the web of facts on a fixed pattern and takes the harmony and brilliancy of its own coloring for the real face of history. Gibbon may well assign as causes of the rapid spread of Christianity the zeal of the early Christians, their belief in a future life of rewards and punishments, the power they claimed of working miracles, their pure and austere morality, their unity and discipline. But he leaves out the very soul of the Christian religion, *the love of Jesus Christ crucified,* which was in every martyr's heart and mouth, and who so often appeared to them in their noisome prisons in ravishing visions like that of St. Perpetua. He has studied in vain the documents and monuments of those days who does not see that it was by the divine alchemy of love that Jesus transmuted the stony pagan heart into the living breathing Christian heart, and stamped it forever with His name, and sent it forth among mankind, the seat and source of infinite

divine ardors and fancies—a weak and fleshly vessel, indeed, but interpenetrated with celestial virtue, and capable of shedding forever a healing spiritual aroma through a fainting and decaying world. Why should the belief in future punishments attract the Greeks and Romans, who, according to Gibbon himself, were abandoning their immemorial Styx and Tartarus? How could the Christian morality be attractive to the immoral masses whose lives it stigmatized, and to its impenitent rulers? The causes that Gibbon assigns are as much effects as causes. Their own origin needs first to be explained, above all their combination in Christianity and at that time. As Cardinal Newman has well put it (Grammar of Assent, pp. 445 and 446): "If these causes are ever so available for his purpose, still that availableness arises out of their coincidence, and out of what does that coincidence arise? Until this is explained nothing is explained, and the question had better be let alone. These presumed causes are quite distinct from each other, and I say the wonder is how they came together. How came a multitude of Gentiles to be imbued with Jewish zeal? How came zealots to submit to a strict ecclesiastical régime? What connection has such a régime with the immortality of the soul? Why should immortality, a philosophical doctrine, lead to belief in miracles, which is called

a superstition of the vulgar? What tendency have miracles and magic to make men austerely virtuous? Lastly, what power has a code of virtue as calm and enlightened as that of Antoninus to generate a zeal as fierce as that of Machabeus? Wonderful events before now have apparently been nothing but coincidences, certainly, but they do not become less wonderful by cataloguing their constituent causes, unless we show how they come to be constituent."

There is no parallel to this in the spread of Mohammedanism. The doctrine of Islam was spread by the sword. The idolaters, the heathen, were exterminated, the Jews and Christians allowed to live, but in the most humiliating subjection and surrounded with odious restrictions. The lot of the Oriental churches under Islam was the saddest imaginable. There have been wars innumerable among Christians in the name of religion, but they are usually against the law of Jesus, while according to Mohammed the sacred war ought to be chronic. Islam is a national travesty of some of the best elements of Judaism and Christianity, elevated to the dignity of a universal religion. It is a poor, weak, grotesque worship, such as might arise in the brain of a visionary cataleptic and among a half-savage people. It identifies Church and State. It is a wretched replica of Byzantine Cæsaropapism, and in all essential

points is only a low-grade, universalized Arabism. It was the sense of political greatness, of national destiny, that made its first followers fanatically brave. They fell upon peoples long unaccustomed to any resistance, in a moment when the military strength and system of the Empire were weakened by long wars, at a crisis when its own provinces turned traitor and admitted the enemy for the sake of revenge, because of the religious oppression and the civil despotism of Constantinople. How different is all this from the spiritual victory of Christianity with all its elevating influences and the embellishment and perfection of all human life with which it comes in contact!

In the first chapter of his Epistle to the Romans St. Paul puts his finger on the chief source of opposition to the preaching of Christianity, the frightful immorality of the Roman world. That is the usual source of hatred for the preacher of the Gospel, whether it comes from the Iroquois or the Chinese or some mediæval barbarian chief. Renan will not admit that it was as bad as St. Paul depicts it. But the rare examples of virtue that he cites are scattered over a long time, and only serve to intensify the moral horror of the reality. The imperfect but less immoral religions of Greece and Rome had become corrupted by their contact with the vile worships of Syria and

Egypt, which made even the army of the Empire their channel of propagation to the remotest West. These orgiastic religions of debauch drove out in turn the mysteries of Greece, and enthroned their horrid symbols in every community of the Roman world. Words fail to express, the tongue refuses to utter, the wretched depths of moral degradation which human society had reached in the days of the first propagation of Christianity. The very worst vices were sheltered in the temples dedicated to the worship of the gods. Unnatural vice and general infanticide, profligacy and licentiousness in every shape, went unchecked, nay, were become laudable customs of society. The popular amusements, the stage, the circus, the arena, were one wild orgy of immorality; unfeeling cruelty to the weak and the helpless was the order of the day. Not only did the gladiators die by thousands in single combats to make a Roman holiday, but whole armies of men were compelled to bloody combat, for the pleasure of the populace. It has been said by a great scholar that "if the inner life were presented to us of that period which in political greatness and art is the most brilliant epoch of humanity, we should turn away from the sight with loathing and detestation. The greatest admirer of heathen writers, the man endowed with the finest sensibilities for beauty and form, would feel at once

that there was a great gulf fixed between us and them which no willingness to make allowance for the difference of age and countries would enable us to pass."

A hundred human interests were opposed to the spread of the new doctrine. The owners of the pythonical girl and the silversmiths of Ephesus were only types of a great multitude whose local and temporal interests were affected by Christianity, and who pursued its missionaries with the fiercest hatred. All the ministers of luxury and extravagance, all the multitudes who lived by the temples and the abominable superstitions of the age, all the traffickers in human flesh, were its sworn enemies. Though the offspring of Judæa, for several reasons it was the object of Jewish hate and opposition, and the Jews of the time were still a world-wide power with which the Empire itself deigned to reckon. Apostate brethren, angry excommunicated members, jealous public teachers or so-called philosophers, the pagan priesthood, professional spies and informers, the very members of his own family, were the daily cross of the primitive Christian. He walked as with a charmed life amid a world of enemies.

Withal, the little communities grew with incredible rapidity. Whole provinces like Bithynia were Christian before Christ was one hundred years dead. Before the end of the second century the most peace-

ful of religions had filled every city with its adherents, and one of its writers could threaten Roman society with desolation if the Christian multitude abandoned it. With its doctrines of equality, humility, charity, a future life, one understands with ease how it appealed to the world of slaves and lowly people. To these it brought a priceless balm, the assurance of another and a happier life, where the iniquitous conditions of the present would be abolished or reversed. And yet with almost equal strength it attracted the hearts of many among the wealthy and the powerful. Among the first converts were Pharisee priests, a Roman proconsul, a scholarly physician, a Greek judge, noble Jewish matrons, women of refinement. A fourth-century legend tells how at the birth of Christ a fountain of oil burst forth from the soil of Rome. A cistern of sweet waters had, indeed, broken out in the social desert of the Græco-Roman life, and already the renown of its virtues was noised abroad to the ends of the earth. In spite of the external splendor and grandeur of their conditions, a multitude of the better classes were suffering profoundly from the emptiness, the insufficiency, the growing horror of life. Only too often they went out of it by the dark but open door of suicide, and there is a profound truth in the picture of their mental sadness and despair that Matthew Arnold offers us:

"On that hard pagan world disgust
And secret loathing fell;
Deep weariness and sated lust
Made human life a hell.

"In his cool hall, with haggard eyes,
The Roman noble lay;
He drove abroad in furious guise
Along the Appian way.

"He made a feast, drank deep and fast,
And crowned his brow with flowers;
No easier nor no quicker passed
The impracticable hours."

Unwittingly the aristocratic writer Tacitus is the first to reveal the names of Roman nobles who took refuge in the teachings of Jesus: Pomponia Græcina, the wife of the Roman conqueror of Britain; Flavius Clemens, the Roman consul, with his wife and niece; the two Flaviæ Domitillæ, whose Christianized family cemetery may yet be seen at Rome. Before the year 100 A.D. the family of the Acilii Glabriones, the proudest in Rome, was Christian. Henceforth the epitaphs of the Catacombs show us the descendants of Cicero and Atticus and Seneca among the humble adorers of Jesus, often themselves blessed martyrs—like Cæcilia and Agnes. In the oldest parts of the oldest Catacombs we come across the broken epitaphs of Christian Æmilii, Cornelii, Maximi, Attici, Pomponii, Bassi, and many others of the foremost families of republican Rome. The pagan

priests, the philosophers, the magistrates, might sneer at the rustic, uncultured, and gross mob of Christians; the latter knew that before the altar of many a little Christian church there knelt with them the near relatives of the rulers of the world. The rulers of the world themselves were more than once attracted by the doctrine and the society of Jesus. Long before Constantine, the Christians could claim the Emperor Philip the Arabian as one of their body, while the Abgars and the Tigranes, kings of Edessa and of Armenia, were Christians before the end of the third century, as was also the Greek king of the Crimean Bosphorus. It is an old Christian tradition that Tiberius desired to place Christ among the gods, but was prevented by the Senate. So, too, the Emperor Hadrian is said to have built many temples to Christ in which no statue was placed. The Emperor Marcus Aurelius was attracted by the healing powers of the Christian bishops, as was his near successor, Septimius Severus. Caracalla was brought up by a Christian nurse, with Christian playmates. Commodus had a Christian wife. Although his prime minister, Ulpian, was so anti-Christian that he is said to have codified the legislation hostile to the Church, Alexander Severus placed the portrait of Christ in his private chapel, and commended the concord and prudence of the Christian bishops to his generals and

magistrates as models for their administration. An early legend made Christians of the wife and daughter of Decius, perverting no doubt the real fact of the Christianity of the wife and daughter of Diocletian. A hundred years before Constantine, the Christians had become *the* problem of the Empire. As they multiplied, the state wavered again and again in its treatment of them. Pagan Cæsars and Christian bishops were indeed mutually exclusive of one another, as Decius very clearly saw. The former could never break away from the antique view of state supremacy and all-sufficiency. On the other hand, learned Christians were forecasting little by little the dawn of a reconciliation that to some, however, seemed the last word of folly and spiritual blindness.

# ST. PAUL: TEACHER OF THE NATIONS.[1]

## I.

With its own subtle sense of justice the Christian Church has conferred from very remote antiquity the title of doctor or teacher on certain famous bishops like Augustine or Ambrose, Gregory Nazianzen or Chrysostom. She has recognized in these men sanctity of life, depth and purity, vastness and pertinency of doctrine, evident vocation, and large discipleship. And these have sufficed in her eyes to make her single out such men and lift them up on the great cathedræ of authority, whence their very words in all future time become spiritual law and guidance, as once the opinions of an Ulpian or a Papinian sufficed for the citizen of Rome or Antioch. The world has always yearned for instruction. Man is an *animal docile,* a teachable animal. Whether it be poet, prophet, lawgiver, king, judge, philosopher, or his-

[1] Discourse delivered on the occasion of the Commemoration of the Conversion of St. Paul (Jan. 25, 1899), feast of the Faculty of Theology.

torian,—man has always admired, sometimes too ardently, those who have loosened the bonds of his ignorance and taught him necessary truths, useful arts, the reasons of things, the mysteries of life and death. Of all the Greek myths, that of Prometheus, the teaching-god, is the most human-natural; he must be cold indeed who can read unmoved the woeful plaint of this bright spirit, riveted by jealous Zeus "with clenching teeth of adamant" to the stony face of Caucasus!

To this immemorial gratitude of our race we owe the names and deeds of a Solon and a Lycurgus, a Numa, a Socrates, an Herodotus, to speak only of those worthies whom the classic peoples have embalmed in their memories as their best and greatest teachers.

It was not, therefore, without reason that the Christian Church symbolized her gratitude for the services of her great teachers by the selection of an ancient term, which she elevated from mean surroundings, and consecrated henceforth to the illustrious company of those who teach the things of God, the soul, human conduct, the future life, the nature, qualities, beauties, and uses of all being,—notably of man, the world, and all the infinite relations of the creature to the Creator.

We are gathered to-day to make our yearly com-

memoration of the selection of such a teacher at a turning-point of the world's history. Only, a teacher immeasurably greater than any Augustine or Chrysostom, one at whose feet they confessed themselves happy to listen and learn, a teacher whose calling was directly from the mouth of God Himself, whose doctrine was acquired by no slow process of human training, but poured from above into his capacious mind, even as the drawer of water fills his vase or urn from the generous outpouring of the fountain.

*Paulus Doctor Gentium!* Paul the Teacher of the Nations! This is an ancient title, so ancient that it comes down to us from those dim ages when the first Christians were making, not writing, history. It is embedded in the oldest and sweetest prayers of the Roman Church. It must have echoed in the centuries of persecution from the mouth of a Pius or a Cornelius as he besought the intercession of the founders of his see. It is solemnly acknowledged by the original churches as often as they make mention of the episcopal supremacy, the "pontificium" of St. Peter. Indeed, more than once he lays claim to it himself, directly, as in the Epistle to the Galatians (c. ii.) and indirectly in the account of his conversion that the Acts furnish us (c. ix.). It is as a teacher that he makes his first public appearance in the Christian communities, as autodidact, as

ἰσαπόστολος, the equal of any of the twelve in knowledge and commission. And throughout the documents that have come to us from his hand he maintains at its original high rating the office of teacher, whether he be summarizing in vigorous and luminous traits the history of human morals, or expounding the philosophy of human wrong and imperfection, or pleading for a fugitive slave, or reviewing the astounding dealings of God with Israel.

But no teacher becomes such without preparation. He may be called out of the regular order, and his doctrine may be delivered to him, *totum teres atque rotundum*, from a superior and infallible source. Yet he is a man, with a mind and a heart. He has behind him infancy and boyhood and youth. There are in him indestructible elements of heredity, parental, racial, mental. And he has lived in given surroundings, long, intimately, unsuspectingly,—among other men who themselves are mouthpieces of old tradition and custom. His mind and heart have each their own life-history, very even and uneventful, it may be,—and then again, perhaps, very checkered, broken, and stormy. Still, in either case, there is in every human soul an organic growth, an unfolding as of a flower or a fruit. Indeed, what flower or fruit suffers the thousand delicate, shifting,

elusive influences that the mind of a child does,—influences more varied, more constant than the play of shadow and sunlight, the motion of the atmosphere, the flowing ether, the heaving of the sea?

So this Jew, born at Tarsus in Cilicia, in that hollow of the Mediterranean where the Hellene and the Semite were wont to meet as at a common outpost, bore all his life the traces of his early education. It colored his teaching, his arguments, his language, his similes. He was an Hellenistic Jew, but not like that Jew whom Aristotle knew and who was an Hellene in very spirit and temper, not like those Asmonæans and Herodians who were even then frittering away the last relics of the traditions of Israel. No, Paul was a Jew, *intus et in cute*, of the soundest "stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of the Hebrews, as touching the Law a Pharisee." He had gone through the primary schools of the Jewish quarter at Tarsus, had learned the text and the interpretation of the Law, perhaps been the equal of Josephus, who was a learned teacher of it at the age of fourteen. Thrice a day he had turned his face to the Holy City and poured out the glorious benedictions of the Schmone-Esre, the Jewish Credo, the very text which one may yet read in any Jewish book of prayer. Twice a day he had piously uttered the Schma, the confession of Jahve's unity and power and glory taken

from Deuteronomy and Numbers—the Doxology of Judaism. He had worshipped regularly in the synagogue by the blue and tideless waters that laved the wharves of his native town. There he read the Scriptures through in a three years' course, commented on them and heard them commented on. He observed the three signs of a strict Jew—the fragments of white wool on the four corners of his cloak that kept the commandments before him, the little roll of parchment containing the Law hung up on the right-hand door-post of his room, the Tephillim or the parchment slip of the Law fastened upon his right arm, and the Tephilla or similar slip bound tight upon his forehead. In the observance of Sabbaths, foods, fastings, purifications, none was stricter than Saul of Tarsus. And when he went up, between thirteen and sixteen, to the advanced school or academy of Gamaliel at Jerusalem, every Pharisee and Scribe rejoiced, for now a new strength appeared upon the horizon, even a youth of destiny. He was indeed a little Origen of the Jews, whose bosom seemed already the abiding-place of the Holy Spirit—a refreshing fountain of prophecy so long dried up.

Nevertheless, in all these years he had not escaped the omnipresent influences of Hellas. Since Alexander, the Orient was slave to the charm and the puissance of Greek letters, Greek art, and Greek

philosophy. Parthian kings assisted at the plays of Euripides, and the Greek drama left the impress of its genius even beyond the Indus and as far as the sacred waters of the Ganges. Asia Minor, though only its fringes were Greek in blood, counted numerous cities of Greek origin scattered among the ancient inhabitants of its high valleys and tablelands. This was notably the case along all the great roads by sea or by land. And Tarsus was at the juncture of two such roads, the seaway coming eastward from the Hellespont and northward from Tyre, Sidon, or Cæsarea, and the landway that came down through the deep and narrow passes of Cilicia. In the time of Paul it was even an academic centre. The Stoic Zeno had once lived there and caught from life-worn and world-wise Orientals the germs of his powerful doctrine. Roman law was doubtless taught in its schools, or in not distant Berytus. There is some slight smattering of Greek culture, not in style or thought, but in fragments of poetry or proverbs, in the great Apostle. He knows considerable about the law of the Empire. He has not the pastoral simplicity of Amos, or the love of nature of Isaias, but draws his metaphors from the camp, the arena, the lives of soldier and wrestler and runner, from the city-world, the world of resolve and action. When he was not earning his living by weaving the coarse

Cilician cloth made of goats' hair, he must have had leisure to move about among the splendid monuments of old Greek civilization, temples, baths, markets, porticoes, hippodromes, fountains, statues, inscriptions. Here, too, perhaps, in this old centre of Greek and Oriental philosophies, in this minor university town, he imbibed that supreme contempt for the "wisdom of the world," "the disputers of the world," the "loftiness of human speech," the "persuasive, the learned words of human wisdom." Such phrases refer not to human reason, but to the impotency of philosophy to usurp the office of religion. One day in Athens the disputers will call him, in turn, a "sower of words," and turn a contemptuous back upon his glorious message. But his teaching will grow, and Justinian will at last close their useless schools that a Nero is now flattering.

The soul of Paul, then, must have undergone a remarkable formation. It was filled with intense religious enthusiasm from youth. It was forced into profound acquaintance with the theology of Judaism. Its fibre was hardened like fine steel by hourly conflict with self, by reasoned contempt of human wisdom and glory, above all by the worship of an ideal Messias of Israel who should one day reward him and his for their most painful finical fidelity to the Law, their long sorrowing exile among these

infidel Greeks and Asiatics—a Messias who should come, even soon, in splendor and majesty and power, and inaugurate in the Holy City the final reign of the just and the saints, of all those who had been loyal and true as adamant in the midst of wretched apostasy and pitiful composition and accommodation.

It was a mighty time, big with the new humanity, one to which all the ages had been looking forward as to their complement, the very fulness of time. The melodious Mantuan and the aged Simeon echo the same cry of the bursting human heart. The forces of the earth were erasing or eliminating one another in favor of Rome. The political world was taking on an entirely new bent and trend, to last for many a day—nay, to our own time, just as when the material cover of earth was finally warped and swollen and sunk into its actual shape. The agitation of the times threw out extraordinary characters—Syllas, Pompeys, Cæsars, Herods, Augusti—in the mad race for the prize of universal dominion. It was truly a struggle of godlike giants of personality.

But for firmness and tenacity of purpose, clear vision of his scope and the means to realize it, utter self-abandoning devotion to a cause infinitely higher and holier than himself; for long-biding patience, intense sustained activity, iron will that laughs all obstacles away; for thorough dominancy of men

and situations, and the power to compel the whole army of his workers within the lines laid down by his own personal genius—in a word, for all the qualities of a commander, St. Paul is more than equal to any man of his time. This is the view of St. Chrysostom, perhaps the most sympathetic and observant of the students of St. Paul, out of whose delicate analysis more than one modern has drawn.

*In St. Paul character shines out dominant, supreme.* Out of whatever loom came that great heart and mind, they were of one pattern, fitted perfectly to one another. He is a man, rude and hard and stern, if you will, but certain, self-identical, reliable. There is in him no shiftiness of the ordinary apostate, no plasticity of the standard Greek. It is always yea, yea, or nay, nay. He sees all things in one clear, strong, unwavering light, a light that so permeates his conscience and floods its remotest corners that he may not be false to it. Through all theorizing and casuistry of human ingenuity, Jew and Greek, he sees the original golden threads of duty and righteousness that lead directly from the soul to God. And seeing them he seizes them and holds them forevermore.

It is because St. Paul, as a disciple of Judaism, developed every native energy of his being that he was one day pre-eminently fitted for the office of a teacher;

because in him the most ideal Judaism of the last days came to the front that he was fitted above all other Jews to be specially called by Jesus; because in his heart met the tides of Pharisaism and Hellenism, that he was chosen to be the saving unction of the latter. Who else of the Pharisees had the magnanimous soul capable of penning the first chapter of the Epistle to the Romans, of announcing an apostleship for obedience to the faith in all nations for the name of Jesus Christ, of declaring himself debtor to the Greeks and to the barbarians, i.e., to all humanity?

## II.

The world was indeed the only fit school for a man of his training. Alexander wept because he had no more worlds to conquer; Paul was heart-broken because he could not offer to his Master, Christ, every one of those miniature worlds called men, in whom alone the outer world has meaning, praise, end, and dignity. For over thirty years this extraordinary teacher travelled the highways and the by-ways of the Orbis Terrarum, the Græco-Roman world of antiquity. It is doubtful if any official or legionary was more frequently on the great strata or roads that bound the principal cities; certain that none travelled them more foot-sore, worn, and weary, but

radiant with faith and beaming with resolution. Who knows as he that narrow strip of Syrian coast, northward from Cæsarea, scarcely more than a ribbon of stony pathway in some places? How often he read the pompous inscriptions of dead conquerors on the rocks above him! There is the Gulf of Issus on whose shores Darius staked and lost the Orient! There are the Gates of Syria and the Gates of Cilicia through which all Eastern conquerors have passed to reach the highlands of Asia Minor and thence the Hellespont! How often he crossed and recrossed the Ægean and the Mediterranean, moving among the islands famous in ancient story! There is the coast of proconsular Asia with its five hundred Greek cities, its rich trade with East and West piled up in Miletus and Smyrna and Ephesus, its countless ateliers of Rhodian sculptors, the remnants of whose works now fill the museums of a world, its schools of philosophers, poets, and rhetoricians,—all its golden human life, abundant, throbbing, and varied! There, too, is old Ilion, on the slope of Ida, between Simois and Scamander; and if the Apostle knew Homer, perhaps some verses of that strange shadowy struggle of men and gods crossed his mind as the timid shore-keeping galley drifted by, so close, perhaps, that his eyes could rest on "Mæander's crooked arms" and "Xanthus' gulfy flood."

It was a time of infinite curiosity and endless peregrination, this golden age of peace and wealth, but in Paul of Tarsus there is no trace of things that were then and to him minor and insignificant. On every journey he is the herald of Jesus Christ. Whether he toils among the mountains of Cappadocia, or the plateaux of Galatia, or the swamps of Lycaonia; whether he goes from one Macedonian town to another, or crosses the Midland Sea to face great Cæsar himself, he is everywhere and always teacher, missionary, apostle, prophet, founder. In all history there is no such example of sustained concern and anxiety for the growth of an idea. And if the origins of our religion are mean and humble as far as power and wealth go, they are grandiose, sublime, if we reflect on the men who planted it, the hardships they bore, the contempt they lived down, the hatred they turned to love, the love they lifted to the enthusiasm of martyrdom.

What a world it was! The external order was faultless; the Roman Peace was everywhere observed, save by a wandering pirate or some irreducible brigands. Arts and letters and philosophy flourished on all sides. Commerce grew and industry flourished, and the court-poets could flatter the brain of the vast machine that the golden age of Saturn had come, precisely at the time when the Jews looked

for a Messias who was to break the wings and crush the talons of that Roman eagle which looked down exultantly from the gates of the Holy City.

But withal it was a hard and a wicked world. And when its apologists have said all that can be said for it, there remains yet so sad a picture that the heart instinctively shudders, a picture of might priming right without the defence of eternal protest, of labor despised and poverty trampled upon, of slaves without rights, children without moral training, and women without honor or respect. The moral sense was all but dead. Philosophy had lost its power over the multitudes, even if it served to console or guide an unhappy few. Letters were yet a thing of joy, a refuge. But when did letters ever fill the cravings of the soul that is morally weak and unsettled? Moral advice never flowed more elegantly than from the lips of Seneca, yet who followed it? He himself as little as any one. The Stoics themselves felt that what was wanted was a model, a perfect just man, in whom every virtue should see mirrored all its possibilities. It was this personality which Christianity offered. It bridged by the life of Christ the hopeless gulf between the abstract and the concrete. And then it sent forth into the world universal teachers like Paul, who lived over again, as men,

the life of their divine Teacher, and shed on all sides the aroma of His infinite virtue.

## III.

As a teacher St. Paul has had no equal in the history of humanity. Overflowing with the consciousness that his doctrine is not of man, but of God, he knows no wavering, but goes straight to the point at issue—Jesus Christ is God and Man. He was crucified and rose again. In Him our broken and weakened nature was dipped, as it were, in a refreshing bath, and a new love and energy added to it. We are again, by these mysteries, children of the Father now appeased, and brothers of the Son of God, who has atoned through all eternity for the shortcomings of human nature, has wiped out the contractual slavery under Satan, and reopened the narrow but straight path to eternal life, to reunion with the juridical head of our race, Christ Jesus, foreshadowed by Adam's original headship and responsibility.

It is a deep and subtle teaching, so deep that the plummet of thought has not yet fathomed its last recesses, so subtle that it furnishes food for minds of every type and calibre. This first commentator on the Life of Christ rose at one

bound to the highest empyrean of thought, and exhausted all the fundamental capacities of the mind as against the life and spirit of Jesus. Paul may defend his conclusions by a sublime dialectic of his own, very peculiar and very forceful. He has not reached them by any slow-winding staircase of digressive thought. Paul has seen; it has been revealed unto him, in the blinding light of that dread hour amid the flowery fields and apple-orchards and flowing waters that surround Damascus, in the cabinet of Ananias, in those three years of meditation and self-searching beyond the lines of Greek and Jewish life,—among the aboriginal Saracens or Bedouins of the Arabian desert. Here he has learned to know the difference between the spirit of the law, its scope and character, and the 'ugly thorny hedge which degenerate doctors had built up about it. Here God transformed, in the silence and peace of nature, the proud and ardent soul into an instrument of choice, supple, devoted, courageous, intelligent. He shed the fantastic theology of the Pharisees; he rose to a sublime conception of the One God as Father, all-merciful, the parent of all humanity. He learned that Judaism was not the end of creation, but a step, a phase, a temporary refuge, a beacon, a pulpit, and that man, humanity, all life, all the

crowding ages that shall ever be—this was the reason of the Messias, His kingdom, His triumph, and His glory.

In long and tender colloquies with his divine Master Paul rose above all mankind, and took on something of the personal manner and authority of Christ Himself. In the same breath he is dust and ashes, and then again he thunders and flashes truth after truth, warning after warning, appeal after appeal. His bosom is the channel of divinest thoughts and ardors, and at times he swoons away —the frail vessel of the flesh is all but consumed by these terrific fires. He stands an intermediary between the soul and God, like the very binding link of religion, and he is filled with the most solemn consciousness that on his vicarious tongue and action depends the fate of a world. He is like one of those narrow estuaries through which the waters of an ocean are driven, whose bed and shores are torn and churned and gashed by the elemental conflict of wind and waves.

Not only is this man a devoted teacher, holding back nothing of himself; he is also a man of single purpose. His own person sinks away and is lost —he is voice, hand, channel, only an instrument fitted to the will of Jesus Christ. Faith and love have all but drowned his individual self; he is

willing to be an anathema, a castaway, a thing of scorn and pity for his brethren, because his own love hath so loved them.

He is also a teacher of sublime courage. Men admire to-day whoever stood out in former ages for truths we now perceive in their entirety—Galileo, Harvey, Jenner, any forerunner of the true, the good, and the beautiful as we taste or know them. But how faint the merit of all such when compared with the courage of a man like Paul! His teaching was unpopular, new, and difficult. It was full of rock-like principles about which the powers of earth must one day rage and the peoples shout vain things. It cut in between man and wife, between father and son, between the spiritual and the temporal, between the soul and the body, between God and Satan, between the City of Sin and the New Jerusalem. Scarcely had it been formulated when men nailed its Founder to a gibbet that He took for a throne. And scarcely had it got across the borders of Palestine when all life and society were filled with uproar, when there was a cry thoughout all humanity: "To your tents, O Israel!"—and almost in the twinkling of an eye there stood over against one another the hosts of organized society and the little band of brethren who knew that now the hour had come

to go out from kin and home and neighbor, and seek the new Land of Promise.

We can only admire from afar the unparalleled courage of the man who broke down that alliance of earth-powers, and freed the soul of humanity from the vain terrors and superstitions and still vainer errors and prejudices that held it like a crust.

He is not a teacher from his cathedra alone, a Plato or a Zeno; he is a man of action. See how he follows up the openings for Christ at Corinth, in Galatia, in Macedonia! See how he forecasts his journeys to Rome, to Spain! See how he bears about in his heart the needs of the poor, over-taxed, decaying city of Jerusalem, how he is anxious over schisms, elections, friendships, new doctrines! He has caught from the heart of Jesus Christ something of His undying enthusiasm of humanity.

A teacher must be called by higher authority, so great are the responsibilities toward society, so supreme are the demands made upon the office, so far-reaching, for good or evil, the effects of its administration. Almost at death's door, St. Patrick took up the pen in his aged and palsied fingers to prove that he had not entered Ireland without a proper calling. St. Paul himself avers that no one

may minister unless called of God, like Aaron. Again and again he recalls his own vocation, given through Christ. His secretary puts down the history of it in the note-book of their travels. It is his pride and support; he will even go up to Jerusalem to the chief of the Church and the principal apostles, to have their juridical approbation, lest he run in vain, or outside of the new society.

Yet his calling was an extraordinary one. How often since then has it happened in the history of the Church that the greatest things have been done, not by those born in the faith, but by men who have drifted into it by many long and painful wanderings! It is the mystery of the eleventh hour, of the vocation of our ancestors, of the cornerstone that the builders rejected, the mysterious law of the success of failure, of the triumph of minorities. Justin, Athenagoras, Clement, Cyprian, Augustine,—to speak only of very ancient examples,—are not these the later teachers of the Christians, and did they not all go through the preliminary schools of paganism?

For all students of theology St. Paul has a real domestic significance. He is the father of Christian theology. In him are contained *radicitus*, in germ, all the ecclesiastical sciences—the inter-

pretation of Scripture, the basic theories of Christian doctrine, the principles of morality and the details of conduct, the origins of the public worship or liturgy, the first chapters of Christian history, the spirit and method of apologetics, the primitive institutions of Christian life and practice. What Homer was to the Greek mind, the source of all progress and evolution; what Vergil was to the Roman mind, the mentor of Roman virtue, the index of Roman fortune—that and infinitely more St. Paul was to the Christian mind. In him Jesus Christ raised up and inspired an infallible lawgiver and teacher, as a sure corner-stone to His little society, about which all the weak, uncertain human elements of the time must coalesce.

St. Paul is, moreover, the parent of all great Christian literature. Justin and the Apologists, Clement of Rome, Irenæus,—all the leading Christian thinkers are dominated by him in the second century. Old Abercius of Hieropolis is right in asserting his leadership, and Renan is wrong in saying that his influence paled in that century. The heresy of Marcion and its vigorous refutation show that during all the sub-apostolic time St. Paul was the focus of Catholic theological life. The story of Paul and Thecla shows how well he was remembered about the middle of the

second century, when legend had already begun to spin its web about his life-story. Augustine, Chrysostom, the great Cappadocian Fathers, Patrick, Gregory, Bernard, are great torches lit along the ages from his flame. Of St. Patrick the cautious and judicious Tillemont said that no other saint so recalled the Apostle Paul. The great Christian Councils of the first six centuries are dominated by his theology, and it has been well said that in spirit and guidance he is their true president.

In his pastoral epistles he has left us, as it were, the first manual of clerical conduct. And all later works, like the Apologia of Gregory Nazianzen, the De Sacerdotio of Chrysostom, the Regula Pastoralis of Gregory the Great, the De Contemptu Mundi of Innocent III. are but echoes, adaptations of these first chapters of formation and guidance.

Finally, he is to us the model of our dealings with the people of God. He has *flammantia verba* and *sæva indignatio* for evil, but only pity for the sinner. He is full of compassion and gentleness for the poor, the humble in society, the outcast. For those who are Christ's his heart overflows with love; for those who are not yet of Christ he is thoughtful, ingenious, laborious,—he must win them or perish in the attempt. For Jew and Gentile he has reason and argument, history and phi-

losophy, when occasion demands it. He takes up the discussion in the Areopagus; perhaps he conversed with Seneca. In his Roman apartment all were free to come and go, and he was no indolent dreamer in those years.

There opens before us a world not unlike that into which Paul went down and came out victorious—a world to be won again for Jesus Christ by the example of our lives and by the victories of the mind; a world as proud and self-satisfied as any Rome or Greece, yet gentler, milder, more refined and accessible. On the other hand, it is harder to convert it to the Christian view of things, for it has once fallen away, and the saving dew does not often fall twice on the same pastures. To speak to this world, to be believed by it, we must appropriate something of the spirit and the methods of the Apostle of the Gentiles. It must be convinced of our genuine affection for it. It must see in us the natural virtues it admires and practises. It must find in us elevation of view, breadth and abundance of human sympathies, gentlemanliness, genuine tolerance, courtesy of mind, heart, and tongue, a large and hopeful patience in God's wise management of His own work. We must, in very fact, according to our talent and our circumstances, become all things to all the men of our

age, if we would truly take up the mission and the teaching of the Apostle of the Nations.

God grant that the number of such disciples of St. Paul increase, and that under the ægis of his spirit and his faith there may be again an united Christendom, the only worthy outcome of the labors of so sublime a guide and teacher! God grant us, as time goes on, an ever larger number of men devoted to the work of the ministry, possessed with one purpose, filled with the old and the new learning, passionately fond of their own age and their own country, with great hearts to feel for the needs of both, sure and clever instincts to adapt what is needful, enlightened minds to execute the same, and transcendent enthusiasm to sustain them in their work and to inflame with the same consuming spirit each his own time and generation!

*Impendar et superimpendar!* Let this be the cry of every noble soul who would live for others, not for himself! Let it be your answer to every temptation to a life of ease and security when the vast conflict calls for zeal, fiery and mordant, but breathing love and self-sacrifice! Let no cynicism, domestic or foreign, dim the freshness and the impact of your ardor! Let no tale of worldly-wise rationalizing experience relegate you to the rear as camp-followers! Rather be ever well up in the

front, along the red ridge of battle, where alone the prizes of success are to be had! *Mors acerba, fama perpetua, stabit vetus memoria facti.*

There are yet mighty deeds to be done for Jesus Christ, even the reconquest of an apostate and disillusioned world; and they can only be done in the uncalculating warrior spirit that sustained St. Paul and enabled him to create anew for his divine Master a real world, the inner world of the soul, belief, ideals, hopes, that world of which things and sciences are only the beautiful but transitory envelope.

## A BISHOP OF ROME IN THE TIME OF DOMITIAN (A.D. 81–96).

Out of the wreck of the earliest Christian literature there has come down to us a document of great price —the Epistle of St. Clement to the Corinthians. From time immemorial it has been attributed to the third successor of St. Peter, although the inscription of this golden letter bears the name of the whole Church at Rome:

"The Church of God sojourning in Rome to the Church of God sojourning in Corinth, to them that are called and sanctified by the will of God through Our Lord Jesus Christ. Grace be to you, and peace from Almighty God through Jesus Christ be multiplied."

The personal note is so developed in its few but weighty pages, the assimilation in one heart of the great truths of the Old and the New Testament is so pronounced, the style is so unique, and the tone of authority so firm, that from all antiquity the epistle has been recognized as very specially this ancient

Pope's own composition. Less than a hundred years after its reception, Dionysius of Corinth informs us that it was read every Sunday in his church as the Epistle of Clement. St. Irenæus, his contemporary, calls it the very important letter of the Roman Church to the Corinthian Church in the days of Clement. Hegesippus, another contemporary, living at Rome about A.D. 170, knows it as the Epistle of Clement to the Corinthians. Its genuineness is beyond a doubt: in addition to the above, it was clearly before a writer of the first quarter of the second century, St. Polycarp of Smyrna; for its phraseology reappears in his famous Epistle to the Philippians. As Polycarp was a disciple of St. Ignatius of Antioch, we are thereby assured that the Epistle of Clement was current in all the Mediterranean lands almost on the morrow of its promulgation in the community at Corinth. This illustrates the method and rapidity with which the apostolic correspondence was carried on. Indeed, for a long time all Christian literature is epistolary in character.

In the last decade of the first century the Corinthians had given notable scandal by their rebellious disposition in the matter of the election of a bishop and presbyters. St. Clement, at the first lull in the persecution of Domitian, chides them for the

jealousy and envy which they have thus laid bare to a scoffing and malicious world. In calm and stately language the Old Testament examples of submission, humility, and peaceableness are brought forward as a reproof of the seditious temper of the Corinthians. Among other arguments, the conduct of the Redeemer, the analogy of all creation that moves in perfect order and harmony; the imitation of God, who wills humility, union, and concord; the example of earthly government, the conduct of the apostles, the deadliness of schisms, are in turn urged upon the ringleaders of the opposition, to whom a final appeal is made for the restoration of order. They should exile themselves, if needed; for the concord of hearts is as necessary in the Church as faith and good works. He recommends to the Corinthians his legates, the first ambassadors ever sent by a pope, in a tender formula that sums up the intention and spirit of the epistle:

"Send back to us speedily our envoys Claudius Ephebus and Valerius Bito, with Fortunatus as well, in peace and joy; in order that they may the sooner bring the news of that peace and concord which we desire and pray for; in order that we, too, may the sooner rejoice over your return to quiet and order. The grace of Our Lord Jesus Christ be with you and with all in every place who have been called by God

through Him. Through whom be unto Him glory, honor, power, majesty, and dominion everlasting from the ages that are past for ever and ever. Amen."

In more than one respect the Epistle of Clement recalls the writings of St. Paul; according to very ancient traditions of the Roman Church, he was the personal disciple of both its holy founders. Numerous echoes of the Pauline epistles haunt the ear of the reader in every paragraph. There is the same proleptic habit of speech, the same Semitic absence of concern for those processes of thought that are common to the Greeks and Romans, and to us their intellectual offspring. It is truly the work of an Hellenistic Jew, of a man whose Semitic soul spoke perforce in the idiom of Homer and Demosthenes, but lived with Moses and Isaias. Had we nothing else from this wonderful half-century of transition, we should know that a mighty religious current was then forming in the world, along which the Good Tidings of redemption were being borne, away from the ancient maternal hegemony of the Synagogue, into the hearts of Greeks and Romans, who yet moved about in forum and agora unconscious that Jesus was already predestining them to apostleship and martyrdom. In passing, we may say that it disproves thoroughly the modern contention that the Roman Church was then divided into a Petrine

and a Pauline faction; Clement speaks of both with equal affection, and quotes both. Had any such dissension existed at Rome, that Church would scarcely have read to the Church of Corinth this solemn lesson of concord.

In this earliest apostolic letter of the Popes the critical historian of theology will find the germs of every science that the Church has cherished and nurtured in her long career. It is the oldest document of canon law, the first non-inspired chapter of church history, the earliest interpretation of those principles of moral theology that lie embedded in the Old and the New Testament. It contains the oldest Preface of the Mass that we know, and is, therefore, most precious material for the history of Christian worship. It is an irreproachable witness to the books of the New Testament as revealed and inspired; the student of pastoral theology could read no more admirable specimen of that calm self-possession and "sweet reasonableness" that ought to denote among men the guide of souls.

How refreshing it is, in the dearth of satisfactory accounts of the earliest days of Christianity, to meet with the following pen-picture of the persecutions of Nero and Domitian—to see before us Peter at Rome in the language of one who saw him there, to see Paul on his way to Spain, to behold the Circus

Maximus crowded to the vomitories, and the horrid joy of its ferocious multitude as they looked down on noble matrons and tender maidens tossed on the horns of wild bulls, or made to act out in their bodies the cruellest scenes of Greek mythology! After a touching description of the evils that jealousy and envy had worked in the Old Dispensation, the writer comes suddenly down to the living present:

"But enough of these examples from days of old. Let us take those great ones who are nearest to our time,—let us take the grand example which our own generation supplies. It was for jealousy and envy that the greatest and most righteous pillars of the Church were persecuted and fought even unto the death. Let us set before our eyes the good apostles: Peter, who for unrighteous jealousy submitted not to one nor two but many labors, and who, having thus borne witness, passed to the appointed place of glory; Paul, who by reason of jealousy and envy was able to point by his example to the prize of patience. Seven times was he thrown into prison; he was driven into exile, he was stoned; then, when he had preached in the East and the West, he attained the noble renown which his faith won for him, teaching righteousness to the whole world, and coming to the farthest limits of the West. Lastly, he bore witness before rulers: and thus passed from the

world, after proving himself a marvellous pattern of virtue.

"To these men of holy conversation we must add a goodly company of elect souls who gathered around them, and who, when by reason of jealousy they were subjected to countless indignities and tortures, stood forth as a noble example among us. It was by reason of jealousy that women were persecuted and were subjected, under the guise of Danaides and Dirces, to dreadful and unholy violence, until they won the goal for which their faith struggled, and they received, despite their feebleness, a noble prize."

There is a lyric ring about several chapters of this epistle that recalls the noblest utterances of Ezechiel or David. When Clement would persuade his Corinthians to observe the subordination of souls so admirably illustrated by him from the Old and the New Testament, he adds to his arguments the analogy of nature:

"The heavens obey Him, moving in peace according to His ordinance. Day and night complete the course which He has appointed them, giving no hindrance one to the other. The sun, the moon, and the stars in their twinkling dance, preserve due concord and never swerve aside, while according to His plan they unfold the courses assigned to them. The earth teems with produce at her proper seasons in

obedience to His will, and sendeth forth food in abundance for men and beasts and all the living creatures upon her face, without variance and without any change from what He has appointed."

In his burning eagerness to restore the Church of Corinth to its pristine harmony, the Bishop of Rome does not hesitate to appeal to the example of the legionaries of Rome, whose obedience to their chiefs was proverbial. Were it true, as some maintain, that St. Clement is the same person as the contemporary Christian consul, Flavius Clemens, these words of his would possess an added interest:

"Let us serve, therefore, brethren, with all determination under His faultless commands. Let us take a lesson from the soldiers who serve under our rulers; and let us mark the order, the promptitude, the submissiveness with which they execute the orders they receive. They are not all prefects, or rulers of thousands, or rulers of hundreds, or rulers of fifties, and so on; but every man in his own rank executes the orders he receives from his superiors. The great cannot exist without the small, nor the small without the great. There is a kind of connection between all things, and herein lies their serviceableness. To take our body as an example: the head without the feet is nothing, even as the feet without the head are nothing; in truth, the smallest

members of our body are necessary and useful to the whole body. But all the members agree in submitting to one authority, that the soundness of the whole may be preserved"

Strong with all these arguments from revelation, reason, and experience, he approaches the delicate question of the constitution of the Church, that now for the first time since the death of SS. Peter and Paul was up for discussion. It is instructive to note that he reaches this point only about the middle of the epistle, in the forty-second chapter, after he has exhausted all his powers of persuasion. Clement is an admirable Christian judge. He has had long experience in those domestic weekly courts of the primitive communities, in which, every Monday, the quarrels and discords of the "saints" were heard by the bishop and his presbyters, in order that all might be ready to approach the mystic banquet on the following Sunday. He will not lay down any law so long as he can hope to recall the erring by the way of the heart; in this new teaching no murmuring and recrimination ought to follow the sentence of one who judges in the person and place of Christ:

"The apostles were taught the Gospel for our sakes at the feet of the Lord Jesus Christ; Jesus Christ was sent out from God, and the apostles from Christ. Both, therefore, issued from the will of God

with due order. Having, therefore, received His instructions and being finally established through the Resurrection of Our Lord Jesus Christ, and being confident in the Word of God, they went forth with full conviction from the Holy Spirit, and preached that the kingdom of God was to come. And so, as they preached in the country and in the towns, they proved by the Spirit the first-fruits of their work in each place, and appointed them to be bishops and deacons among them that should believe."

At last, with infinite charity, but without any concession to the rebellious element at Corinth, this man of "sweet reasonableness" utters his decision with the directness of a Roman magistrate, but in a spirit that was new to the tribunals of Rome. In this first and ever-memorable decision of a Roman bishop we have a perfect model of those decisions and provisions that henceforth will go to make up the law of the new Christian society, the canon law. Obedience is based on the known will of the mild and loving Redeemer. Not imperial constitution or rescript, but the Revealed Word of God, is here the source of authority and the measure of submission. Slavish fear and ruinous hypocrisy are no more the motives of compliance with law, but an intimate conviction that the existing order of the churches comes down from the divine Master and is essential

to the religion itself. A rational humility and a willingness to accept the great new principle of solidarity in Jesus are laid down as the corner-stone of the new social edifice. Thereby was opened the career of a novel, all-transforming jurisprudence that never ceased thenceforth to develop side by side with the jurisprudence of Rome, and to show to the world in the persons of a Clement, a Pius, a Victor, a Calixtus, a Cornelius, men no less distinguished in the annals of justice than a Salvian, a Gaius, an Ulpian, and a Papinian.

"No less did our apostles know through Our Lord Jesus Christ that there would be strife over the dignity of the bishop's office. For this very reason, having received complete foreknowledge, they appointed the said bishops and deacons, and ordained that at their death their ministry should pass into the hands of other tried men. We hold, therefore, that it is an act of injustice to thrust out from their ministry men who, with the good will of the entire Church, received their position at the hands of apostles, or of other honored men of a later time, and who, in all humility, ministered to the flock of Christ without offence, peaceably and without presumption, and who have on many occasions been well reported by all. For we shall be guilty of no small sin if we reject men who have holily and without

offence offered the gifts pertaining to the bishop's office. [He means here the holy sacrifice of the Mass.] Blessed are the priests who have departed hence in time past; for they continued till their time was fulfilled and their work had borne fruit: they have no fear of being removed from their appointed place. We must needs beware; for ye have taken upon you to put some men out of their office, although they walk discreetly and have held their position without offence."

When we read these pages, that even now seem dimmed with the tears of apostolic eyes and charged with the agonies of an apostolic heart, we do not wonder that nearly all the most ancient legislation of the Christian churches that has come down to us, whether apocryphal or interpolated, should have sheltered itself under the name of Clement of Rome, as though to commend its spirit, its trend, and its de-details, by the authority of so profound a master of the principles of Christian society.

With persistency he returns to his task; for this epistle is more like a long *conversazione* between a loving father and his wayward children than anything else. He would have the Corinthian Christians zealous and ardent, but against the common enemy, not against one another:

"Be contentious, brethren, be jealous concerning

the things that belong unto salvation. Ye have examined the Holy Scriptures; they are true, they were given through the Holy Spirit: ye know that in them there is written nothing that is unrighteous or false. Ye will not find in them that righteous men have been removed from the company of the holy. . . . Why, then, are there strifes and angers and parties among you? Have we not one God and one Christ? Was not one Spirit shed forth upon us? Have we not one calling in Christ? Why do we rend and tear asunder the members of Christ and are divided against our own body? Why have we reached such a pitch of madness that we forget we are members one of another? . . . It is shameful, beloved, very shameful; nay, more, it is unworthy of your education in Christ—that it should be reported that the Church of Corinth, so long and firmly established as it is, should be divided against its presbyters at the bidding of one or two ringleaders. Nor has this report come only to us: it has reached even those who hold not with us; so that ye cover the name of the Lord with blasphemies because of your folly, and are laying up danger for yourselves besides."

Toward the end of his epistle the writer ceases to argue. In his person the Church of Rome convokes the Church of Corinth before the altar of the cross.

The Bishop of Rome betakes himself to prayer—a last and irresistible weapon in the Christian's armory. But to no ordinary private prayer: it is the solemn and public service of the Catholic Church that we hear, and in particular one of those grandiose Prefaces of the Mass such as were sung in the earliest days of Christianity, when the personal enthusiasm for Jesus was like a clear new flame in the hearts of His priests; when every meeting of Christians was one long dithyrambic service, during which the evil world and the reign of Antichrist faded from this lower consciousness, to give place to the vision of a victorious and rewarding Christ, enthroned above the sun and the stars, and looking down with ineffable tenderness on His disciples as they moved upward and onward beneath the whips and stings of life, the offscourings of this world, the scandal of the Jew and the stumbling-block of the Greek. These sublime phrases, a cento of Old Testament passages and texts, are, perhaps, the oldest document of the holy Mass outside of the inspired writings. They are also like a flash-light picture of the daily life and temper of the Christians of Rome, nay, of the entire Roman Orient, as will be seen at once by all who are familiar with those venerable and archaic liturgies that go back to within hailing distance of this very time:

"We call upon Thee, O Master, to be our helper and defender! [Ps. cxix. 114.] Save such of us as are in affliction; have pity on the humble; raise up the fallen; show Thyself to such as are in want; heal the sick; convert those of Thy people that are in error; feed the hungry; ransom our prisoners; raise up the feeble; comfort the weak-hearted. Let all the Gentiles know that Thou art God alone [I. Kings viii. 60], and that Jesus Christ is Thy Son, and that we are Thy people and the sheep of Thy pasture. [Ps. c. 3.] Thou didst manifest the perpetual constitution of the universe by Thy works therein. Thou, O Lord, didst create the world! Thou art faithful throughout all generations; Thou art righteous in Thy judgments; Thou art wonderful in Thy strength and splendor; Thou art wise to create and cunning to establish the things that are made; Thou art good in Thy works which are seen, and faithful with such as put their confidence in Thee; Thou art merciful and full of compassion. Oh, do Thou forgive us our transgressions and our unrighteousnesses, our faults and our weaknesses! Impute not to Thy servants and Thine handmaids all their sin; but cleanse us thoroughly by Thy truth, and direct our steps that we may walk in holiness and righteousness and simplicity of heart, and that we may do that which is good and well pleas-

ing in the sight of Thee and of our rulers. [Ps. cxix. 133; Deut. xiii. 18.] Yea, Lord, cause Thy face to shine upon us for blessing [Ps. lxvi. 2], with peace, that we may be covered by Thy mighty hand and be delivered from all sin by Thy high arm. [Ex. vi. 1.] Save us from them that hate us without a cause. Grant peace and concord to us and all that dwell upon the earth, as Thou gavest it unto our fathers when they called upon Thee in faith and truth with holiness; that we may obey Thy almighty and all-holy Name, and render submission to our rulers and governors upon the earth."

This epistle was written less than seventy years after the crucifixion of Jesus Christ. The death of Augustus was not a century away. This writer had seen and conversed with SS. Peter and Paul, and had been an eye-witness of those terrible scenes of the persecution of Nero that Tacitus describes. On his way to some Christian service in the domestic hall of Pudens or the family cemetery of Lucina or Domitilla, this man might have often met the stern historian of the atrocities of Nero and Domitian. He might have seen that Irish kinglet whom Agrippa, the father-in-law of Tacitus, kept attached to his person. The younger Pliny was yet a frequenter of the Roman tribunals, perhaps a careless observer; for later on, when he was confronted with

the propaganda of Christianity in Bithynia, he seems to have regretted his lost opportunities. The verses of Juvenal and Martial were still fresh on the lips of the spoiled youth of Rome.

On one occasion Clement must have been called on to perform an act of hospitality that was most pleasing to Our Lord. It is related, apropos of Domitian, by Hegesippus, a Christian historian of the end of the second century: The Emperor had heard that certain descendants of the "brethren" of Christ were preaching another kingdom among the Jews. He had them brought to Rome, where they showed him their hands worn with toil, and assured him that all they owned between them was one small field: the kingdom they preached was the kingdom of heaven. Thereupon he dismissed them with contempt. Clement and the Roman Christians surely received and sheltered these descendants of the "brethren" of the Lord.

Long ages afterward the posterity of the families related to Jesus were held in honor throughout the whole Church. Origen speaks of them in the third century, and perhaps they still enjoyed high distinction in the Church of the Nazarenes that retained its Jewish peculiarities as late as the fourth century. If Stephanos, the assassin of Domitian, were a Christian, as later rumor had it, Clement would have

mourned over that desperate act of a freedman of the Domitillas. Nowhere in the literature of early Christianity is the duty of civil obedience, even to the most lawless rulers, more firmly inculcated than in this letter to the Church of Corinth. Perhaps it is so because Clement had already heard angry murmurings among his flock at the insensate conduct of the apocalyptic beast.

We may also believe that Clement would visit often the sepulchres of Peter and Paul,—the latter on the Ostian Way, the former on the outskirts of the Vatican Hill, beside a temple of Apollo, where now rises the vast Basilica of St. Peter. His predecessor, Anacletus, had already built on the site a *memoria*, or little church; and doubtless the monument of St. Paul that the Roman priest Gaius speaks of, about A.D. 200, was already built. He would be seated on Sundays in the venerable Chair, or *cathedra*, of Peter that is yet preserved in his great church, especially when he celebrated annually the feast of the apostle.

For that matter, the Roman memories of the first vicar of Jesus Christ were yet numerous enough and attached to fixed objects and localities. There was the four-square dungeon of the Mamertine; there was the house of Pudens where Peter gathered the Christian people; there was yet in use the wooden

altar of the apostle, now at the Lateran; there were the localities of "Domine, quo vadis," and the "Fasciola," or bandage; there was the house of Aquila and Priscilla, now Santa Prisca; there was Peter's ancient place of baptizing "ad Nymphas," happily rediscovered in the Ostrian cemetery. The house of that other Clement, the martyr-consul, must have been yet a meeting-place of the Christians, whose younger adepts already began to affect the name of Peter in baptism. Other little churches were surely in the houses of the mysterious Lucina and the ancestors of St. Cecilia; in the house of the greatest of the Roman nobles, Manius Acilius Glabrio; and in the houses of others who had also fallen a prey to the rapacity or suspicions of the persecutor Domitian. The very old Catacomb of Priscilla, we know, has held the proofs of this fact until the present day.

It was in the days of Clement that the city was finally made a thing of perfect beauty, and stood shining in her dress of precious marbles, intoxicating from afar all hearts and inflaming all imaginations with the tales that rumor spread abroad, though helpless to equal the reality. Men pored over the pages of past history, and examined the constitutions and policies of all former states, only to proclaim that now at last the flood of change was fixed; now at last an abiding city had been built—the

Lucky, the Happy, the Eternal, the Golden Queen seated upon her Seven Hills.

And yet, O Root of Illusion that nothing can sear in the heart of man! in that hour her fate was sealed. Strange quiverings of prophecy were even then shooting through her mighty frame, as when Tiberius, worn with his exertions, pointed to the teeming North and bade the Senate make provision betimes. Something, too, seems to have moved the sad old man to call upon Christ; for respectable tradition has it that he wanted Him put among the gods of Rome, but the Senate feared His infinite charm. Nevertheless, this despised Christ was to be the final conqueror of the Senate and the city and their raging enemies beyond the Rhine and the Danube!

Claudius and Fortunatus and Bito, as they passed out the Appian Gate on their way to Brundusium to take ship for Greece, bore in the epistle of Clement a spiritual dynamite that shook irreparably the only solid foundation of any society—the hearts of its members. Here were the best elements of Judaism and the loving reverence of the Law allied to those new things which Jesus had brought—a divine perfection of both, and an extension of the same to all mankind. But these new things were now set forth in a language that Greek and Roman could understand, with happy borrowings from their philosophy

and literature and customs, and even their cherished fables; the whole moulded by a hand of genius into unity and infused with the purest spirit of Jesus Christ.

For centuries this letter of a Bishop of Rome was read regularly in the Church of Corinth, and the influence on the early Christian world of this majestic Roman document cannot be overestimated. In it Peter and Paul lived on, speaking and acting in each successor. Through it, more than through any other early document, the note and criterion of "apostolicity" were enforced upon the churches. The Church of Rome has many titles to the gratitude of mankind, but none older or more venerable than this first authoritative interpretation of the constitution of the Catholic Church; all the more remarkable as her decision was unasked for, and the beloved disciple was still living and founding churches in Asia Minor.

## THE CHRISTIAN MARTYRS OF LYONS AND VIENNE (A.D. 177).

MANY a reader of these pages has stood upon the hill of Fourvières at Lyons and gazed from the platform of the great modern shrine of Our Lady upon the mighty city that spreads away beneath her loving gaze. Long the centre of the silk industries of France, the huge town is yet one of the world's great markets; and its favored position at the meeting of the waters of the Saône and the Rhône assures for an illimitable future its ancient coign of vantage. In the Middle Ages Lyons was an outpost of Germany; more than once it hung on slight contingencies that this heart of uncertain and shifting Burgundy should be finally Teutonic. A General Council was held there in 1245, at which the great canonist Innocent IV. excommunicated the second Frederic, after a famous discourse on the five sorrows of his own soul and the five wounds of the Church.

We are not concerned here with the mediæval function of this splendid city as a factor in the poli-

tics and religion of central Europe, in the gathering and distributing of the wares and manufactures of the East and the West, in the transmission and modification of institutions from Roman to German life, and *vice versa*. A history of Lyons would be a history of the marvellous smelting of barbarism and antique civilization in the fifth and sixth centuries, such as the contemporary Gregory of Tours has outlined in his inimitably fresh and truthful book.

But German barbarism was still a remote threat in the middle of the second century after Christ. The philosophers of Rome, her captains and statesmen and priests, were more concerned about the spread along the river of the new doctrines of a despised Jew named Jesus the Christ. Yearly new communities cropped up to whom His "Name" was the symbol of a new life and to whom His "Work" was the sole ideal worthy of the human heart. The temples were being abandoned, the sacrifices neglected, and the numerous trades that prospered by both began to suffer. A hundred vices, grown venerable by toleration, scented from afar their conqueror and prepared for resistance. The genial worship of Greece, the grave and ancient rites of Rome herself, the fantastic mummeries of the Orient, made common cause against the newcomer. Year after year complaints went up to the venerable senate, peti-

tions were sent to the emperor, the military authorities were besought, the lawyers rummaged the decisions and opinions of their predecessors, in order to cast out the adepts of the new religion, who boldly confessed themselves by the peculiar name of Christians. The growing evils of Roman society were laid at their door, and the wisest complained

> "That Heaven rains plagues upon the guilty earth;
> That Pestilence is let loose, and Famine stalks
> O'er kingdoms, withering them to barrenness;
> That reeling cities shake and the swoln seas
> Engulf our navies, or with sudden inroad
> Level our strong-wall'd ports."

It was in vain that the disciples of Jesus bade men look into their upright and blameless lives; that they abstained from sedition and intrigue; that they left uncared for no sorrow or misery of their own and their pagan neighbors; that they surpassed the classic ideals of Pythagoras and Plato and Seneca; that their mutual affection astounded those world-worn and life-weary men of the Empire who had lost all respect for humanity. They were, indeed, the soul of that ancient society, even then stricken to death; though as yet it heard not, or heeded not, the dread response of the decree of fate. More than a century must elapse before this primary truth could be accepted by the proud rulers of the world; just now the Christians were a cancer to be cut out or

burned out from the body politic threatened by them with corruption and ruin.

And so it was a right glad message of permission and encouragement that Marcus Aurelius (A.D. 161–180) sent across the sea, via Marseilles, to the men of Lyons that they should stamp out the Christian impiety and atheism. He had just finished his great campaign against the German Quadi, during which the white oxen of Rome, so ran the epigram, had sent him word that they feared his victory, for on his triumphal return they would of a certainty be all immolated by him. Perhaps he had already put down in his "Meditations" that the Christians were guilty of an immoral stubbornness against the supremacy of the state; though that did not prevent him from calling on their God for water in a hopeless drouth, or from summoning a Christian bishop to heal an imperial princess. Falsehood has ever a special right to inconsistency.

For several reasons the original records of the Christian persecutions have not come down to us, except in a few cases, and these often in fragmentary or imperfect shape. Of some no account was kept, or the brief and hurried notes of the appointed scribe were lost. It was at best a poor humble domestic literature, subject to the rabid violence of the mob, even if it could escape the natural enemies of all

writing—time, the moth, fire, water, removal, ignorance. Of the numberless victims who died in the Colosseum or the Circus Maximus for liberty of conscience only a few are known to us by name, and of them only a few are better known by their genuine acts. The persecution of Diocletian was particularly the cause of the disappearance of most of the ancient Christian writings. During the last years of the third and the first of the fourth century many of them were handed over to the imperial police, to protect the Holy Scriptures, whose superior authority and dignity these rude mercenaries were usually unable to understand.

There is, therefore, a certain pathos about all the genuine acts of the early Christian martyrs; but about the victims of the persecution at Lyons there is something more—the unstinted admiration of the entire Church then and afterward; a savor of simple joy and childlike eagerness to be through with the dread experience and to rest in the bosom of the Lord; an extraordinary calm of spirit; an absence of rancor against their tormentors; and an elevation of soul that place them on a level with the noblest witnesses who ever laid down their lives for the love of Jesus. Their story is told by one of themselves, in a letter to the Churches of Asia Minor, as the inscription shows:

"The servants of Christ who sojourn in Vienna and Lugdunum of Gallia, to the Brethren throughout Asia and Phrygia who hold the same faith and hope with us of redemption, peace, and grace and glory from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord."

It would have entirely perished, like so many other Christian documents of the time before Constantine, had not the great historian Eusebius decided to give large excerpts from it in the fifth book of his history. Its opening paragraph refers to the ugly mutterings before the storm—"the variety of sufferings endured by the blessed martyrs, which we are neither able to state with accuracy nor indeed is it possible for them to be embraced in writing." They were excluded from all public places—the baths and markets and streets; yet the grace of God acted as their general, and ranged them in strong battle-array against the Evil One, and enabled them to bear all reproaches, to make light of all oppression, and to show "that the sufferings of the present time are not to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed in us."

"First, they nobly endured all that had to be borne at the hands of the mob and rabble; they were hooted, assaulted, pulled about, plundered, stoned, and forced to barricade themselves in;

in fact, they suffered every indignity which an infuriated mob is accustomed to inflict upon its supposed adversaries and foes. At length, being brought into the forum by the chiliarch and chief men of the city, they were examined in the presence of the whole multitude; and having confessed [their Christianity], were put into prison to await the arrival of the governor."

One Vettius Epagathus, a most upright citizen, protested in vain that there was nothing impious or sacrilegious among the Christians—precisely what the two deaconesses had told Pliny in Bithynia some sixty-five years before. He was asked from the judgment-seat if he, too, was a Christian; and on confessing it, was ranged "in the order of the martyrs," while the mob jeered at him as the lawyer of the Christians. The writer of the letter saw the holy martyr before him as he wrote; for he exclaims that "he was and is a genuine disciple of the Christ, following the Lamb whithersoever He goeth." Then follows an account of the preliminary examination, always a moment of dread for the bishop and the priests and deacons who had been day and night laboring with the chosen victims, that no fear or pusillanimity might seize them at the last moment.

"Thereupon the rest were scrutinized, and the

first witnesses were forward and ready, who with all eagerness completed the confession of their witness. Likewise the unready and untrained were made manifest; moreover, also the weak who were unable to bear the strain of a great contest. Of these about ten miscarried, who both caused us great grief and sorrow unmeasured, and also hindered the eagerness of the others who were unarrested, and who, although suffering all terrors, were nevertheless constantly present with the confessors and would not leave them. Then, indeed, were we all greatly anxious, through uncertainty as to their confession,—not dreading the punishments to be endured, but fixing our gaze on the end, and fearing lest any might fall away. Each day, however, those who were worthy were arrested and filled up the others' places; so that there were gathered together from the two Churches all the zealous ones through whose instrumentality especially our affairs had been established. They arrested also certain heathen domestic slaves of ours,—for the governor ordered that we should all be examined in public; and these falling into a plot of Satan, and fearing the tortures which they saw the saints suffering, on being instigated to this course by the soldiers, falsely accused us of Thyestean banquets and Œdipodean intercourse, and of other deeds of which it

is not lawful for us either to speak or think, nor even to believe that the like is ever done amongst mankind. These statements being reported, all were infuriated against us; so that if there were any who from ties of kinship had hitherto been lenient, even these were now greatly enraged and mad with anger against us. Then that was fulfilled which was spoken by Our Lord: 'The hour cometh that whosoever killeth you will think that he doeth a service to God.' " [St. John xvi. 2.]

In the long struggle that now followed between physical force and moral courage there come to light all the distinctive features of Christian martyrdom from Nero to Diocletian. Had we only this touching story, we should know in a general way the ordinary course of procedure against the Christians. The story of the sufferings of Sanctus can never be read with dry eyes. When asked his name, his race, his city, his condition, whether slave or free, he replied in Latin: "I am a Christian." As the letter is written in Greek to Greek-speaking Christians, there is here an archaic souvenir of the days of union between Latins and Greeks ere wealth and success and the goods and ideas of this world finally sundered the holy bond of charity between them. Very lovely also is the narrative of the bravery of Biblias, a woman who had

fallen away at the first examination before the magistrate, but came forward later on, and bore away with glory the palm of martyrdom.

The anonymous writer reaches the limit of his inspiration in the lines that he devotes to the little slave Blandina and her unexampled courage and perseverance. Perhaps the most earnest and truthful phrases that ever fell from the lips of a far different writer, Ernest Renan, are those in which he describes Blandina as the highest type of those Christian women who freed their sex from its moral slavery by such exhibitions of an ineradicable purpose to return no more to the abyss that they had left behind. Blandina looked to the great pagan mob of Lyonese that summer day as indeed something "worthless and uncomely and despicable." Yet, says the writer of this superb tragedy, she was deemed worthy of great glory by God because of her enduring love for Him.

"For while we were all afraid for her, and her earthly mistress, who was herself also one of the witnessing combatants, dreaded lest she should be unable through bodily weakness boldly to make confession, Blandina was filled with such power that she was set free from and contrasted with those who tortured her with every kind of torture in turn from morning to evening; and

who confessed that they were conquered, since they had nothing left which they could any longer do to her; and that they marvelled at breath remaining in her when her whole body was lacerated and laid open, testifying that one of the tortures by itself was sufficient to end life, let alone so many and such great ones. But the blessed woman, like a noble athlete, gained her strength by her confession, finding refreshment and freedom from pain in saying, 'I am a Christian,' and 'We do nothing vile.' "

These bloody scenes had now lasted several days. The aged Bishop Pothinus, over ninety years of age, had died in prison of the abuses received. A great band of holy witnesses had been despatched with every refinement of cruelty. The writer, transfiguring the language of the circus, says they were like a wreath of many-colored flowers that was offered to the Father by these noble athletes, in the hope of receiving at His hand the splendid wreath of incorruption. Alexander the physician, from Phrygia, died a hero's death, after he had for several days encouraged by word and look these pioneers of the Christian state. Attalus, a man of repute in the city, had also died in the most painful torments. After having been paraded about the arena with a placard on his breast bearing the

words, "This is Attalus the Christian," he had been remanded to prison, only to be brought out on another day, placed upon an iron chair and roasted to death. As the hot odor from his poor body was borne aloft, he said to the crowd, in Latin: "Lo, this it is to eat men, and you are doing it; we neither eat men nor practise any wickedness." The writer here returns to the true leader of this extraordinary band of men and women before whom that day capitulated unconsciously the power that deemed itself the Queen of the World.

"Finally, on the last day of the gladiatorial games, Blandina was again brought forward with a lad of about fifteen, named Ponticus. These two had been brought in each day to witness the punishment of the others, and had been pressed to swear by the idols. And because they remained constant and set them at naught, the populace grew furious, so that they respected neither the youth of the boy nor the sex of the woman; but they made them pass through every form of terrible suffering, and through the whole round of punishments, urging them to swear after each one; but they were unable to effect this. For Ponticus, excited to zeal by his sister, so that even the heathen saw that it was she who encouraged and strengthened him, yielded up his spirit after

nobly enduring every punishment. And the blessed Blandina, last of all, like a noble mother who had excited her children to zeal and sent them forward as conquerors to the King, recapitulated in herself all the conflicts of her children and hastened to them; rejoicing and exulting in her death like one invited to a bridal feast rather than thrown to the beasts. For after the scourging, after the beasts, after the frying, she was at last enclosed in a net and exposed to a bull; and having been many times tossed by the beast, and being no longer sensible of her sufferings on account of her hope and firm hold on the things entrusted to her and her converse with Christ, she also was sacrificed; even the heathen themselves confessing that never yet amongst them had a woman suffered such manifold and great tortures."

We are not told by the writer of the letter what the Christians did when these dread scenes were over. But we know otherwise that they were wont to meet frequently and recite before one another these tales of heroism, that acted as whips and spurs for the undecimated remainder. Without bitterness they listened to these simple but burning paragraphs ere they were folded and sealed, and delivered, with his letters of credit, to the messenger who should bear them across the Mediter-

ranean to the high tablelands of Phrygia, where the face of Paul was yet vividly clear to the communities he had established, and where a stern and solemn fervor of faith and hope still possessed the souls of a large percentage of the native population. As he descended the hill of Fourvières the messenger-deacon would no doubt hear every dying echo of those victory-psalms that Milman has so touchingly paraphrased in that death-chant of Margerita which fittingly closes his noble poem on "The Martyrs of Antioch":

"Sing to the Lord! let harp and lute and voice
Up to the expanding gates of heaven rejoice,
While the bright martyrs to their rest are borne;
Sing to the Lord! their blood-stain'd course is run,
And every head its diadem hath won,
Rich as the purple of the summer morn;
Sing the triumphant champions of their God,
While burn their mounting feet along their skyward road!

"Sing to the Lord! for her in Beauty's prime
Snatched from this wintry earth's ungenial clime,
In the eternal spring of paradise to bloom;
For her the world displayed its brightest treasure,
And the airs panted with the songs of pleasure.
Before earth's throne she chose the lowly tomb,
The vale of tears with willing footsteps trod,
Bearing her cross with Thee, Incarnate Son of God.

"Sing to the Lord! it is not shed in vain,
The blood of martyrs. From its freshening rain
High springs the Church like some fount-shadowing palm;
The nations crowd beneath its branching shade;
Of its green leaves are kingly diadems made;
And wrapt within its deep embosoming calm
Earth sinks to slumber like the breathless deep,
And war's tempestuous vultures fold their wings and sleep.

"Sing to the Lord! no more the angels fly
Far in the bosom of the stainless sky
The sound of fierce, licentious sacrifice.
From shrined alcove and stately pedestal
The marble gods in cumbrous ruin fall;
Headless in dust the awe of nations lies,
Jove's thunder crumbles in his mouldering hand,
And mute as sepulchres the hymnless temples stand."

The bodies of the martyrs were exposed for six days in the arena; then they were burned and reduced to ashes by the pagans, and the ashes were cast into the Rhône that flowed close by. It was thought thereby to conquer the Christian God and to deprive the martyrs of their boasted new birth, or the resurrection. The pagans spread it about that thus "they would have no hope of a resurrection, through trusting in which they bring in to us a foreign and strange religion, and despise terrible sufferings, and are willing with joy to die. Now let us see whether they will rise again, and if their God is able to succor them and rescue them out of our hands." Similar language had been used twenty years before at Smyrna to the proconsul Arrius Antoninus, after the execution at the stake of the blessed Polycarp of Smyrna, the disciple of St. John. We are standing, indeed, at the outer edge of the apostolic times.

It was in the latter part of July and the earlier days of August that these events took place, very

probably in the year A.D. 177. By ancient custom the different provinces of Gaul met annually at this date to consult on provincial business, and to worship at the shrine of Rome and Augustus. The great altar of the latter, a shining marble cube above a mound of green turf, rose near the junction of the rivers, and was dominated by a huge statue of Augustus, around which were disposed sixty smaller statues symbolical of the sixty "cities" of Gaul—or, rather, of the sixty Keltic clan-tribes to whom these "cities" were their ancient seats of power. On that day the martyrs could hear not only Greek and Latin but genuine Keltic accents that would have been understood in Ireland or Britain. Perhaps, for purposes of barter or commerce, some woad-painted Britons or Picts, some gigantic, long-haired, ruddy-featured Scoti from Ireland were there. Nay, it is not impossible that some Christian Irish would have been present; a few years later St. Irenæus, the successor of the martyred Pothinus in the see of Lyons, could write that the Gospel had made its way among the Kelts, who held it in reverence written on their hearts without paper or ink—i.e., by oral preaching.

Among such Kelts may have been some pre-Patrician Irish Christians. The laws of Rome were yet translated into Keltic for the inhabitants of

Gaul, and all memories of Druid lore and magic had not perished. Curious old Keltic gods stood about the amphitheatre while the blood of these Christians was flowing like water; the Romanized grandchildren of exiled Druids could compare with their own huge wicker cages of human victims this hecatomb of Greeks and Latins which outrivalled the archaic rites of blood that Cæsar had suppressed on this very soil. Indeed, it is far from improbable that among the forty-eight whom ancient tradition declares to have died for Christ on that occasion were some genuine Kelts either from the continent or the islands. The well-known ardor and intelligence of the race would have easily led them into the society of the Lamb; and their equally well-known contempt of death and rooted belief in immortality would only confirm their presence among these first-fruits in Jesus of the Church of Gaul. Be this as it may, all Christendom has ever held in loving veneration these pioneers of the new religion along the far-flung line of its proselytism; and cherishes yet, after seventeen centuries, the admirable *procés verbal* of their martyrdom—a statement which for simplicity, feeling, and classic picturesqueness could not be surpassed by any modern account of similar proceedings in the Middle Kingdom.

# SLAVERY AND FREE LABOR IN PAGAN ROME.

## I.

How often do we reflect on the horrors of the old pagan social order! Its overthrow was the greatest boon ever conferred upon the human race. It was so anti-natural and anti-social that it hemmed and stifled every activity of the ordinary individual, reduced him to the condition of a helpless cog or wheel in the general social mechanism, and made the few everywhere and in all things the beneficiaries of the lives, the toil, the very being of the many. The divine cry of Jesus, *Misereor super turbam*, "I have pity on the multitude," wrung from His lips by the contemplation of common human suffering, was more than justified by the actual conditions of social life that then obtained throughout the Roman Empire, and seemed destined rather to grow worse than better with the lapse of time.

The true social canker of antiquity was the condi-

tion of the laboring man, whether slave or free. It had come about that labor had passed into the control of the most oppressive of all trusts—the slavery-trust, by which the productive, distributive, and consumptive powers of all ancient society were regulated with the greatest possible injustice to its unfortunate victims and the no less moral detriment of the masters.

The slave was the machine of pagan society. Its most learned scholar, Varro, called him "a speaking instrument." One half of the Græco-Roman population was enslaved, and of the other half fully one quarter was made up of the poor free proletariat, too proud to work, if it could find work, yet compulsorily idle through the skilful organization of the vast armies of slaves by their shrewd Roman masters. "Armies" is not too big a word. When a quasi-ruined man like C. Cæcilius Isidorus died, he could leave among his assets 4116 slaves. He was a wretchedly poor man who owned only one or two slaves. The poet Horace had only three to wait on him at the table, and only nine to look after his little Sabine villa. Even in the Christian times of St. John Chrysostom the average rich man would own from one thousand to twelve hundred slaves. In his "Banquet of Trimalchio" the poet Petronius shows us the Roman master listening to the daily

register of slave births on his estates—e.g., "thirty boys, forty girls."

Of course the actual number of slaves told off for purely domestic purposes or for the uses of luxury was large, but in relation to their multitude was small, hence the question of their employment was a serious one. In spite of himself the Roman became a manufacturer. He had always a turn for business, and every Roman child was taught the sense and use of figures from its infancy, was accustomed to the keeping of household accounts, and to the balancing of debit and credit columns. It was a nation of peasants and gardeners that had conquered the world, hence their peculiar name for all territory outside of their own little city and suburbs—"prædium populi Romani," the farm of the Roman people. Their slaves were set to work at every possible occupation; they were weavers and bakers, tailors and carpenters. They stored the native and foreign wheat in granaries, and the oil in tall earthen vases that they afterwards piled mountain-high, outside the walls. Storehouses of ready-made clothing, of every value, were filled by their handiwork. When a capital of five hundred dollars warranted the keeping of one slave, and that slave cost only one hundred dollars if it were a man, fifty if it were a woman, what wonder that the great

capitalists who had absorbed the wealth of Greece, Asia, and Africa were able to keep regiments of helpless men toiling forever at their behest!

Indeed, it was a toil forever! There was no limit of law or custom, no certain hours of rest by day or night. As the life of the slave was precarious, the capital, as well as the interest of his cost, must be soon gotten out of his carcass — he was more quickly worn out than a wheat-vessel or one of the heavy wagons that rolled daily over the blue lava blocks of the Appia Nova or the Salaria Vetus. His labor was less costly and more lucrative than that of the free man, for strikes were out of the question, and flight was punished with excessive rigor. Even the surveillance of slaves was done by other slaves, thus reducing to a minimum the expense of the system, and abrogating all free labor whatsoever, even of a clerical or administrative nature.

Occasionally in the Roman inscriptions or epitaphs, of which many thousands have reached us, we hear of corporations of workingmen, their names and meetings and banquets; but these are most likely *chefs d'ateliers*, men who had other slaves under them. So little account was taken of the slave's personality that when, e.g., a bakery or a purple factory was the object of a legacy or an in-

heritance, the law took it to mean the slaves connected therewith, just as the furniture of a house or the implements of a smithy accompany it without further ado.

This human machinery, the quickest, most delicate, and most intelligent that was ever devised, though not the most durable, could be owned by societies and companies, could be exploited like any of the necessaries of life. The slave could be hired out for a day or a year, could be sent to a school of law or medicine that he might be helpful on the distant Cappadocian ranch, in the copper-mines of Palestine or the silver-mines of Spain. Whole villages of slaves were established in the heart of immense *latifundia*, that the other thousands of slaves who worked these vast wheat or corn lands might not want for any of the advantages that could prolong their lives or keep them from becoming a charge on the owner or owners. We are told by Plutarch that at certain crises in the affairs of Rome Crassus bought up the best lots all over the city to sell them at an enormous advance. Too shrewd to build up the territory at his own risk, he let out the services of his building-trust, the five hundred best carpenters and architects in the city.

Thus every branch of industry was in the hands of the slaves, and through them a few men reaped

the fruit of the toil of millions. It is said that six men, in the reign of Nero, owned all Roman Africa. At the same time, not more than two thousand men at Rome owned all the property of the civilized world from the Rhine to the Euphrates. What wonder that when such a plutocrat died, the emperor compelled him to make the state his heir! Not only industry, but commerce and lucrative business of every kind were thus seized on. The poor free individual was shut out of all concurrence except that of vice and shame. If one were to stand on the corner of any street leading to the Forum and look upon the many trades and occupations that made the scene lively, he would behold only the work of slaves. The woollens and cottons, the finished garments in yonder *bottega* were the work of slaves. The olive-hued Syrian who sold them, the tall and lanky Copt who kept the books, the huge German who rolled about the bales of cloth, were slaves. The chatty barber across the street, full of palatine gossip from his brethren on the hill of power, was a child of Athens, and could quote you his Aristophanes from beginning to end. That blond money-changer over at the triumphal arch, with his blue eyes and his thick shock of yellow hair, was a Gaul—his tables are up against the sculptured bodies of Dumnorix, Vercingetorix, and Julius

Civilis. That bronzed and hardy seaman, just back from Carthage or Alexandria, is a Frisian, or a Venete from Brittany, not too discontented with his office as captain of a wheat-fleet. In some way ancient slavery was more tolerable than its modern counterpart, for all ran the risk of falling into its abyss. Neither color nor race, neither former dignity nor ancestry, could effectually preserve one from becoming a slave. On the other hand, it must be admitted, the means of escaping from it were more numerous than in modern slavery. Especially was this the case with what is known as freedmen, manumitted slaves. Yet even they were forever bound to their former masters, sometimes by onerous conditions of freedom, more regularly by the law that prescribed for their master the first right in the inheritance of his freedman, and also compelled the latter to come to the master's financial help on certain occasions.

## II.

Was there, then, no free labor in the city of Romulus? Out of its one and a half million inhabitants we have seen that fully seven to eight hundred thousand were slaves. Of the remaining half, perhaps four hundred thousand formed the proletariat,

i.e., the poor but free inhabitants of the city, the awful mob into which the original plebeians had grown, the refuse of victories, triumphs, and ovations, the *déclassés* of the world feeding on the crumbs and offal of the world's high banquet-table. Some of them lived as clients or hangers-on of the great families both old and new, surrounded the litters of the golden youth of Rome or the shining courtesans from Greece or Asia, or bore aloft the gilded poles with the medallions of ancestry in ivory or mosaic. Others found an easy berth in the service of some temple, or as a lictor or scribe for some magistrate. The numerous bureaux of the great city, the double treasury of the Senate and the Emperor, the tax and customs offices, the quarters of the prætor and the quæstor, the edile and the great lawyers, kept alive an insolent multitude.

Most of this class lived by very crooked and shameful means. They turned mimics or comedians, priests of Isis or Adonis, soothsayers, astrologers, gladiators, dancers, buffoons, jockeys. They were adventurers and "promoters" of every enterprise from Mount Atlas to the shores of Britain. A few of the proletariat did indeed earn an honest living—they appeared as members of "societies for the humble and lowly," worked by the side of their slave brethren, ate and lived with them, and in death were not

separated: their cinerary urns reposed side by side in the little crypts that common contributions had bought and sustained in out-of-the-way spots off the great arteries of imperial traffic.

Thus the poor free man was compelled to a life of idleness with consequent personal disgrace and self-contempt. He became actually a celibate—why should he marry and bring up a family whom no future tempted, no opening attracted, whose progeny could only swell the "rabblement" and "tag-rag people" of Rome? At the best he was descended from the hardy local peasantry of Rome, whom the patricians, like Coriolanus, ever reckoned "woollen vassals, things created to buy and sell with groats, to show bare heads in congregations, to yawn, be still and wonder." At the worst they were just in from Puteoli, or Brindisi, or Marseilles, the wreckage of the latest war or the victims of the latest Verres. One hour their poor plaint would echo in the streets or before some thriving lawyer of long phrases and short fulfilment, then they would drift into the tower-like tenements of the Suburra, to be transformed into the "Roman people." Of them Montesquieu could rightly say that they had no share in the Roman state, except a claim to support allowed from fear and kept up by custom.

Economically, slavery proved at Rome, as elsewhere, the falsest basis of public life. This poor free population, thrown out of its Italian farms by the disorders and injustices of the closing century of the Republic, gathered in congested masses at Rome. Every province sent a percentage of similarly situated men. Tacitus complains that Rome had become a kind of social sewer for the world, and satirists likened it to a sea into which debouched all the rivers of humanity. Long after them, the Christian bishop Leo the Great could compare the old pagan city to "an ocean of stormiest depth and a forest of raging beasts." The riches that were won early from the perfected machine of slavery were now spent upon the support of this huge army of the proletariat. Food was distributed to them regularly, every month or oftener. In the time of Pompey 320,000 had a right to these "distributions." Cæsar reduced their number by about one-half, but they again reached the figures of Pompey's time during the reigns of Trajan and Marcus Aurelius. One-fifth of all indirect taxation went to the support of this idle mob. High stands were erected in different regions of the city whence the *panis gradilis*, or "step-bread," was issued to them by tickets that authorized the withdrawal of so much wheat from the great public granaries by the Tiber. When the

imperial fortune was at its flood it is thought that twelve dollars' worth of wheat *per capita* was given out yearly; when we recollect the cheapness of wheat and the purchasing power of coin, the fact is noteworthy. Sometimes oil and meat were added. When on one occasion an emperor proposed to distribute a monthly allowance of wine to the "Roman people," he was withheld only by the suggestion that he would be obliged to add geese and pullets. In the great games silver was sometimes showered on the mob, sometimes tickets good for food, wine, even jewels, paintings, ships, houses, and estates. Did the emperor celebrate any anniversary, was a new one created, then large presents of money must be given to the mob and especially to the soldiers, from whose pockets it soon went into the till of the *caupo*, or saloon-keeper, one of the only trades left to the poor free man. In one year Augustus gave out to each of this class over one hundred and twenty dollars, Marcus Aurelius nearly twice as much. The habit spread from the Cæsars to the nobles and the rich, and the whole city was often one vast dining-hall, so much so that Tertullian's ire is moved at the "stinking breath" of this "mutable rank-scented mob." Sometimes their rents were paid for a year ahead by some individual anxious for their favor; sometimes all the barbers

in the city were retained for the service of the "Roman people." Between the imposing games that took up half the year and the solemn funerals of the rich and noble, the remaining leisure of the proletariat was heavily drawn on. When one of them got ready to climb down from his high perch in the Suburra, he went with his basket to the nearest rich man's *domus*, or palace, where he got his morning meal. Thence he would stroll to the neighboring square, where he would get his month's *bon*, or ticket for wheat of Africa or Egypt or Sicily. His dinner awaited him at some one of the many public feasts, or at some private celebration, some marriage, or coming of age, some dedication of a temple or a statue, some reading of a new poem or the installation of some relative in a fat government office at Alexandria or Antioch. Did he care for a little amusement? There were the splendid architectural piles known as the baths of Agrippa or Caracalla, where, besides the care of the person, popular recreation of the most exquisite kind was provided for in gymnasiums and libraries. On the temple-spaces, with their broad sweeps of white marble steps, or in the long porticoes with their elegant monoliths of pink or gray marble of Baveno or Syene, he would meet his equals fresh from the excitement of the Circus or the slaughters of the Colosseum, if, in-

deed, they had not rather come from a few hours' sitting at the nasty "continuous vaudeville" performances of the pantomime theatres—that *soupape* of Roman virility and good fortune. Thus his life was of pleasure and idleness all made up, enhanced by the salubrity of the climate and the security of the state. Truly Cicero could well say that the Roman "plebs" led a happy life, since it was abundantly supplied with all the good things of the world, and was freed from any of the carking cares of existence. One of the emperors, Vopiscus tells us, used to say that nothing amused him so much as the "Roman people" after a great banquet.

It had come to this, that the monopoly of all earnest and useful labor had made of the poor free multitude at Rome (and the example of Rome was all-powerful in the Empire) a fattened beast, with all the low passions of a beast. Cæsars came and went; for the proletariat it was only a question of the "full basket" and the gayeties of life. They had helped to rob the slave of his natural liberty and his imprescriptible human rights. The slave, in turn, dug the grave of the Empire. There came a turn in the fortune of Rome: the power of Persia rose in the far Orient, the hordes of Northern and Eastern barbarians were in motion toward the Rhine and

the Danube, impelled by internal revolutions in China. The slave-market was no longer crowded, the wheat-supply was threatened, the vast farms or ranches of Italy and Gaul were less productive. Pestilence and earthquake and famine and seditions fell, flail-like, on the trembling provinces. Then appeared all the secret curses of the slave-trust: the rich, after being made for three or four centuries to bear the burden of state socialism in the feeding and amusing of an ignorant and malicious proletariat, were now compelled to pay the expenses of the state administration. The taxes were collected directly from them, which opened their eyes to the evils of a timocratic state. And when they turned to the "citizens" to reimburse them, they had only the impoverished mobs of the cities and the broken-hearted descendants of those slaves who once cultivated the great ranches of the rich men of Rome. Neither in the cities nor in the country districts was there bravery or good will. On every border of the Empire its enemies were welcomed and aided. The slaves sulked or rebelled, or were conciliated only by the quasi-abandonment of the great estates into their hands as "coloni" or serfs. The proletariat would neither fight with vigor nor bear with patience the reverses of fortune. The armies of Rome were made up, perforce, of German mercenaries, just

fresh from the woods and the swamps beyond the Rhine, in reality only the advance-guard of the endless procession of Goths, Vandals, Schwabs, Heruls, Lombards, who were soon to carve free and pleasant kingdoms for themselves out of the ruins of the greatest state of antiquity.

The fall of the Roman state was not, it is true, owing to slavery alone, and to its attitude toward free labor; but these were essential causes, as all men now see. Happy we, if we keep in mind the stern lesson of history that is well put in the rather trite verse of Goldsmith:

> "Ill fares the land, to hastening ills a prey,
> Where wealth accumulates and men decay."

## THE ORIGIN OF CHRISTMAS.

In the history of institutions there is nothing more instructive, more replete with dramatic interest, more typical of the workings of Christianity than the evolution of the Church year. From the day when a few sorrowing Jews gathered in an upper room of the Holy City to celebrate the first anniversary of the Death and Resurrection of their Founder it has developed among countless peoples and through many vicissitudes of culture and time into an admirable cycle, in which, as on some huge stage, the whole moving history of Christ and His Church is portrayed on a scale so sublime and cosmic, so consistent and poetic, that even as a human creation it ranks among the highest products of man's genius. The heart of this splendid system, in and through which the Christian worship has reached its perfection, is the Resurrection of the crucified Jesus. Around it have arisen in time manifold new exhibitions of an unchanging faith in Him—the suave efflores-

cence of piety and devotion as nurtured in the Church and adapted to the needs of men and ages. Among these festivals, though not the first in rank nor the oldest, Christmas claims still, in some respects, a pre-eminence, as the day on which the Saviour was born upon this weary and sin-laden earth, and the tidings of joy were proclaimed that the secular reign of error and oppression was drawing to an end, and the era of truth, justice, and spiritual liberty was nigh to the dawning.

It is certain that at the end of the third century A.D. the birth of Christ was celebrated in both the Eastern and Western churches. It is equally certain that at the beginning of the fifth century that feast was celebrated in the whole Christian Church (if we except the Donatists and the city of Jerusalem) on the 25th of December. But between these points there was much difference as to the day on which the birth of Our Lord was to be celebrated. The Acts of the Passion of St. Philip of Heraclea show that the feast of Epiphany was observed in the Eastern Church at the end of the third century. Now it is sure that throughout the greater part of the fourth century the Easterns included the birth of Christ among the four reasons for that feast. Thus at that period

the churches of Egypt, Syria, and Palestine celebrated the Nativity of Christ on the 6th of January. St. Epiphanius, a writer of the latter half of the fourth century, is very positive as to the birth of Jesus on the latter date. St. Chrysostom, preaching on Christmas Day, 388, to the people of Antioch, defends the feast from the reproach of novelty, although he admits that in Syria it was then scarcely ten years old. Other Orientals of the early part of the third century, like Clement of Alexandria and Origen, seem to be ignorant of any celebration of the birth of Christ. The language of the latter almost excludes the supposition of such a feast in the capital of Egypt, while the former speaks of it in connection with some Gnostic heretics, who placed the date in April or May. The act of St. John Chrysostom was not an isolated one. In 379 St. Gregory Nazianzen, in union with the Emperor Theodosius the Great, introduced the feast into Constantinople; in 382 St. Gregory of Nyssa, brother of the great St. Basil, introduced it into Pontus and Cappadocia. Clearly it was the authority of the Roman See that, indirectly at least, compassed these notable liturgical acts. It is no small matter that, in face of local oppositions, Constantinople and Antioch should insert in the calendar a specific Roman feast.

The tradition of the 25th of December as the birthday of Our Lord is much earlier and more positive at Rome than in the Orient. St. Augustine speaks of it as an old custom in his time, and in this he is supported by St. Jerome, as well as by the Cappadocians SS. Basil, Gregory Nazianzen, and Gregory of Nyssa. St. Chrysostom justified its introduction into Antioch by the example of Rome, wiser in this matter than the Orient. His judgment seems to have been influenced by a copy of the Augustan census of Judea, which, according to him, was kept in a public place at Rome, and proved the birth of Our Lord at the Roman date. The Apostolic Constitutions, an episcopal manual compiled between A.D. 350 and 425, but containing a much earlier discipline, mention the 25th of December as the feast of the Nativity. Cave even cited Theophilus of Cæsarea, a second-century writer, for this date; the passage cited is from the acts of a council held at Cæsarea in Palestine about A.D. 190. These acts have come down to us through the writings of St. Bede, the famous historian of the English Church in the first quarter of the eighth century. Their genuineness is yet somewhat doubtful, though the newest studies on St. Bede show that he was well versed in the most ancient Christian literature.

Very lately there has been discovered in a Greek monastery of the island of Chalcis a copy of the commentary of Hippolytus on Daniel, in the fourth book of which it is very clearly stated that Christ was born on the 25th of December. Possibly this is an interpolation, as some critics maintain. If it were genuine, we would have here a local tradition of the Roman Church in the early part of the third century vouched for by one of its most brilliant writers and officers. Such a tradition, so soon fixed in the public worship of the Roman Church, would bring us within hailing distance of the apostolic memories and ordinances. Unexceptionable from every point of view is the notice in the Philocalian Calendar of A.D. 336 that Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Juda on December 25th. Shortly after, about the middle of the fourth century (354), we find St. Liberius receiving at Rome, on Christmas Day, the vows of Marcellina, the sister of St. Ambrose. With all these evidences of ancient origin it seems strange that the little ecclesiastico-astronomical tract *De Pascha Computus* of the year 243, written either in Italy or Africa, is silent about the feast of the 25th of December, or rather says positively that the birth of Jesus took place on March 28th; "the day on which God created

the sun was the fittest day for the birth of the Sun of justice."

The feast of Epiphany appears for the first time, as stated, toward the end of the third century, and particularly at Heraclea in Thrace, once the metropolitan see of Byzantium. Shortly after the year 200 a feast of the birth of the Lord was celebrated at Alexandria by Basilidian Gnostics, which fact no doubt moved the ecclesiastical authorities to introduce a similar one among the orthodox. Previous to the Council of Nicæa (325) there is no trace of Epiphany in the West; it is not found on the calendar of the Donatists, who separated from the Church between 312 and 320. Apparently it made its way into the Western churches at the same period that Christmas was adopted in the Orient. Only, the Western churches laid stress, not on the birth of Christ, but on the manifestation of His divinity to the Magi, on His baptism, and on the miracles of Cana. It was celebrated in Gaul A.D. 360, as we know by a passage in Ammianus Marcellinus (XXI. 2, 5) concerning Julian the Apostate. A Council of Saragossa in Spain (380) ordains in its fourth canon that no one shall be absent from the daily church service during the eight days that precede Christmas and up to the Sunday

within the octave of Epiphany. Dr. Baeumer thinks that we have in this canon and in certain statements of St. Cæsarius of Arles the earliest evidence of the Advent preparation for Christmas. In the very ancient and curious manuscript roll belonging to Prince Antonio Pio of Savoy there are some forty prayers dating from the fifth century; one of them reads as follows: "Grant, we beseech Thee, O omnipotent God, the prayers of Thy people! Let Thy justice shine from heaven, and the whole earth bring forth joy so that on the coming [Advent] of the Redeemer of the world, Thy Son, our souls may be filled with abundance of blessings!" Some of these very prayers are yet in use in the divine office according to the Ambrosian rite; others are still to be seen in the Leonine Sacramentary, a Roman Mass-book of the latter half of the fifth century or the early part of the sixth. Another fragment of the *rotulus* just mentioned, lately published by the illustrious Ceriani, librarian of the Ambrosiana at Milan, contains a lovely Christmas prayer which lets in much light on the purity and sublimity of ancient Roman Christian theological thought:

"O God, who didst lie shrouded [*velatus*] within a bodily shelter, and being made known [*re-*

*velatus*] didst leave intact that original cloister, go forth, we beseech Thee, as the Saviour of the world and the Redeemer of mankind, so that while we adore the glory of Thy dual nature, we may, with one accord and correct faith, praise the unity of Thy divine majesty."

The origin of the feast of Christmas has been the subject of much investigation within the last few years. Usener, Probst, Duchesne, and others have consecrated much skill and labor to the question and added something to the efforts of Cotelier, Martène, Tillemont, Bingham, and Benedict XIV., among the older schoolmen of history. What was the motive of its introduction? Leaving aside the supposition that it was celebrated earlier than the third century, and holding in abeyance the question whether it represents the actual date of the birth of Christ or not, two motives have been urged for its celebration at this peculiar time. One is that it was meant to offset the *Saturnalia*, a licentious pagan carnival celebrated from the 17th to the 23d of December. But the very date, *after* the *Saturnalia*, precludes this, and there is no evidence to justify this supposition. The other is that it was established to counteract the pagan feast of the *invincible Sun* (*natalis Solis invicti*), celebrated, according to the

Julian Calendar, on the 25th of December. This may have been among the motives of the feast, especially as the Mithraic cult of the sun was in great vogue during the third century and perplexed the Christians by its proselytism and its imitation of their peculiar institutions. Mgr. Duchesne suggests that astronomico-symbolical motives may have had something to do with the date. According to very ancient Christian belief Christ died on the 25th of March, and as He must have lived an integral number of years, dating from His incarnation, the latter must have taken place on a similar date, whence His birth on the 25th of December. But these are the hypotheses of critics and students. Far more probable is it that the Roman practice of the fourth century represents an accurate preservation of the true date, based on documents now lost. Of the numerous chronological controversies of the second and third centuries very little has come down to us outside of the titles of books. The exterior growth of the habit of celebrating the birthdays of the emperors would naturally lead to a more positive tribute to the King of kings and the Lord of lords, who had laid aside, for the relief of humanity, all the majesty of deity.

"That glorious form, that light unsufferable,
And that far-beaming blaze of majesty,
Wherewith He wont at Heaven's high council-table
To sit the midst of Trinal Unity,
He laid aside, and here with us to be
Forsook the courts of everlasting day,
And chose with us a house of darksome clay."

It may be worth while recalling that as early as the third century the *natalis Petri de Cathedra*, or birthday (i.e., feast) of the Chair of St. Peter, was celebrated at Rome by the faithful. So, too, the *natalis*, or birthday, (unto Christ) of many a martyr was celebrated with such splendor as the conditions allowed. Among so many "birthdays" what is more natural than the celebration of the birth of the true Imperator of the Christians, from whom His vicar held jurisdiction, of the King of martyrs whose expiation began with His birth? Certain it is that the third century saw the growth of a more intense and clear consciousness among Christians that they were the true kingdom of God, and that Jesus Christ was their glorious and invincible Ruler. Perhaps from this period dates the habit of countersigning the Acts of the Martyrs with the words "In the reign of Our Lord Jesus Christ." At Rome, more easily than elsewhere, the frequency and majesty of imperial ceremony would deepen the Christian sense of the Eternal Kingship of

Jesus, and suggest a formal, if domestic, recognition of it. Not improbably it was long a Christian family feast in the humble space that sheltered the Chair of Peter and its temporary occupant before the war of extermination waged, about A.D. 300, against the persons, property, and documents of the Roman Church. Only those who habitually deal with the history of the early Christian ages know by how many slender but firm roots the Roman Church is connected with the beginnings of Christianity.

The idea of a series of saints' days immediately after Christmas seems to have originated at Rome between 350 and 380, to be taken over soon by the Orient. They were formerly the feasts of St. Stephen, protomartyr; St. Peter, prince of the apostles; St. James the Apostle (Minor), St. John the Apostle, St. Paul the Apostle, with December 31st vacant, and on the first of January St. Basil. Father Nilles and Dr. Baeumer explain that these saints are placed here by a kind of *convenientia;* it seemed suitable that the King of kings should be surrounded at once by His chief courtiers, counsellors, ministers and servants. For several of these saints the Church was ignorant of their *natalitia,* or day of entry into the joy of paradise; hence they were suitably

honored in the immediate presence of Him, who had chosen them as His agents. The thought is kin to that which made the ancient Christian mosaicists of Rome place the apostles as "assessors" with Jesus Christ in the scene of Final Judgment. The above-mentioned order is given in the funeral oration of St. Gregory of Nyssa over his brother, St. Basil. It is confirmed by a very old Syriac martyrology, written A.D. 412, now in the British Museum, and published in 1865–66 by the Syriac scholar William Wright. From all this it is clear that there existed at the end of the fourth century a local Roman calendar of feast-days, and that the immediate post-Christmas feasts are, or once were, borrowed from it. With many other valuable Roman documents it is long since lost, and scholars exercise their learning and ingenuity in piecing together what seem to be its remnants.

A very strong proof for the antiquity of the Christmas festival is found in the fact that from time immemorial when it falls on Friday there is neither fasting nor abstinence on that day. Thereby the Church placed Christmas on a level with her most ancient feasts, the Sundays, Easter, and Pentecost. Formerly the feast was vested with many privileges. The intervening days, as far

as Epiphany inclusive, were public holidays. Servants and slaves had a day of repose on the occasion of the feast. The shepherds and peasants were obliged to attend the city churches. Games and shows were prohibited. There was always a sermon on the significance of the mystery, and some of the best efforts of St. Leo, St. Augustine, St. Peter Chrysologus, and other fathers were pronounced on that day. Of the ancient privileges of Christmas only two have survived in the church law, one of eating meat when it falls on Friday, and the other, peculiar to the priests, of celebrating three Masses in honor of the threefold generation of Christ, viz.: from all eternity in the bosom of the Father, in time in the womb of the Blessed Virgin, and in the souls of the just.

The practice of celebrating three Masses has its origin at Rome. It was so old at the beginning of the sixth century that the Liber Pontificalis, compiled at the time, referred it to Pope Telesphore of the second century. The very old Mass-books, called the Gelasian and Gregorian Sacramentaries, contain each three Masses for the day. Anciently they were said at the time and in the order in which they are prescribed in the Missal, i.e., at midnight, before the aurora, and

after sunrise. We know that in the sixth century, and probably earlier, the Pope was wont to say these three Masses at St. Mary Major's, St. Anastasia's (whose feast occurred that day), and at St. Peter's. Curiously enough, the preface of the Nativity, several collects, and many parts of the Masses remain identically what they were fourteen hundred years ago, so jealous is the Church of her liturgy and so capable of preserving it from substantial alteration. The midnight vigil of Christmas is the last relic of a very common custom in the first Christian ages of celebrating nocturnal vigils for the feasts of the saints. The attendant disorders discredited them, so that only the venerable vigil of the Nativity escaped. In the early middle ages all the people were expected to attend the midnight Mass and to communicate, under pain of three years' excommunication, as a means of compelling the performance of what we now call Easter duty. Perhaps this is the meaning of the tradition that the Emperor Justin (the first or the second) ordered Christmas to be everywhere celebrated, no doubt by confession and communion, for it was a common feast long before the time of either Justin.

At an early date legend and fancy seized upon the feast and decked it out with charming myths.

There are some few left from the Græco-Roman time, such as the story that at Christ's birth the Temple of Peace at Rome collapsed; that a spring of oil burst out in the Trastevere and flowed the whole day long into the Tiber; that Augustus saw in the air the Blessed Virgin with the child in her arms and dedicated to them an altar of the First-born God. Pretty fancies! not unnatural in a people who project back upon their pagan past some small share of their new Christian consciousness. It was the Germanic peoples, however, who were destined to make the fortune of Christmas. It fell at a time when they were wont to celebrate their pagan sacrifices, and the missionaries prudently gave their traditional customs a Christian sense and direction. The rich cheer, the abundant presents, the lavish hospitality of their old pagan days were not abolished. Nor were the numerous Scandinavian ceremonies in honor of Yule, the log, the candle, the boar's head, the common feasting. The Lord of Misrule and the Abbot of Unreason continued the carnivalesque character of the northern Yuletide, while the mince pies and spice cakes recall the gross and barbarous wassailings of the primitive Goth and Saxon. Under men like Gregory, Augustine and Theodore of Canterbury, Aldhelm and Daniel of

Winchester, such habits were gradually modified, and within a short time the fierce pirates of the Northern seas gave to God saintly men like Wilfrid, Willibrod, Winfred (Boniface), and saintly women like Eadburg, Hilda, Lioba, and countless others. "It is only by a long course of training that the fancy and imagination can be brought to run in the new groove of thought," says Brother Azarias in his "Development of English Thought." "To that end does the Church bring to bear all her teaching and discipline. By degrees she weeds out the tares of the old faith and plants the new. But there are also in every race and age elect souls who are impatient of such slow formation and leap at once into the front rank of Christian heroes and heroines."

The public feasts of the Church were among the most powerful influences for good that the mediæval Church possessed. In the absence of great cities and extensive commerce they served to gather the people together, to break down the isolation in which the noble and the peasant habitually lived. For a short while private war ceased, Christian charity prevailed, and the voice of the preacher was listened to by vast multitudes, who for another year perhaps would not again visit the haunts of men. The Church made the most

of such occasions. Hence we need not be surprised to find that Christmas was at an early date one of the great feasts on which the mystery plays were executed. We possess a certain number of them yet, just as they were carried out in France and Southern Germany. They are quaint and comical to our modern taste, but were full of meaning to our ancestors, whose faith was so much more direct and intense.

In the Christmas plays the Sibyl exchanges views with Daniel and Jeremias, while Vergil is enlightened alternately by Isaias and John the Baptist. The stage was the public square, and the unities were poorly observed; yet our modern theatre is deeply indebted to these mediæval mystery plays, which were the work of churchmen both as writers and actors, though the Church herself cannot be said to have encouraged them. Akin to the mysteries are the Noels, or religious canticles sung by the people on Christmas Eve, and of which lovely carols France possesses yet a rich collection. They were originally meant to while away the long vigil of Christmas, when the great logs burned slowly in the fireplace and the storm raged lustily without. The simple habits of other days have in great measure passed away,

but the canticles of our forefathers, inherited by them from still earlier ages, yet live to entrance the hearers of the midnight Mass and to bear witness to the pious sense and the delicate ear of men whom we too lightly undervalue. The Middle Ages had a great "Bible of Noels," which seems to have been of Greek origin. In his spiritual letters St. Francis of Sales has more than one thought in common with these old mediæval singers.

We may be tempted to smile at what seems to us the uncouth, uncultured conception of this great Christian festival on the part of our forefathers. But the spirit of the Church was ever the same, and though her children may at times have fallen below it, we have yet the splendid pages of her liturgy and the public instructions of her priests to show that within the sanctuary there reigned at all times the most profound and spiritual views of the nature and celebration of this feast. The education of proud and barbarous nations was no easy task, and only those will scoff at their weakness and the motherly indulgence of the Church who ignore by what infinite patience and by what manifold solicitude the hot, ebullient natures of noble barbarians are soothed and toned into sympathy with the habits of perfect society and the restraints of a sublime religion. The old

Puritan showed an ignorance of human nature as common in the sects as it is rare in the Church when he suppressed the innocent and natural enjoyments of the English people at this period. With the new and vigorous life of Catholicism and the consequent healthier view of human social relations, the cold and sombre spirit of earlier days (not wanting, I confess, in a certain arid grandeur and rough directness) is giving way on all sides to views of life and humanity more kindly, more tolerant and liberal, more in keeping with the glad burden of that angelic song which has been the Church's watchword from the most ancient times.

## WOMEN IN THE EARLY CHRISTIAN COMMUNITIES.

To the cursory reader of the Gospel scarcely anything is more striking than the infinite tenderness and the immeasurable pity which Jesus manifested at all times to the weaker vessels of humanity. He loved to dwell surrounded by the little children; rough treatment of them annoyed Him; He compared His kingdom to their pure hearts; He rejoiced that the little and the humble were let into the secrets of the Father, and He proposed to His disciples as the model of ecclesiastical authority the simple, direct, and candid hearts of little children.

With the women of the Jews He was no less gentle and pitiful. Already His love of the little ones must have captivated the female heart. He was Himself the only Son of Mary. His most consoling words were for the women of Jerusalem, His most touching miracles for the widow of Naim, the Hæmorrhaissa, and the daughter of Jairus. He rendered a delicate homage to the office of woman when he drew from the pains of travail one of the most pro-

found and human-sorrowful of His illustrations. And in the sublime scene of the rehabilitation of the fallen sister from Magdala He defied for her all the social *convenances* and executed a moral revolution. He began His miraculous career at the wedding of a young Galilæan bride. In return the women of the Jews were His stanchest defenders. Some, like Salome, the wife of Zebedee, clung to Him from the beginning to the end. Others, like Joanna the wife of Chusa, Herod's steward, and Susanna gave of their riches for His support, went about with Him and the apostles through cities and towns wherever the good news was spread by the Master. They anointed His head and feet; they rejoiced more than all others when He rode triumphantly into Jerusalem; they sorrowed at the gathering clouds which were soon to burst over Him; they stood afar off and wept as He passed on to His doom; they remained when all others had fled; they were the first at the sepulchre, the first human witnesses of the Resurrection, the first apostles of Christianity, since it was they who first carried the glad tidings that Jesus liveth for evermore, and that faith in Him and His promises is neither vanity nor delusion.

By a law of history the great institutions which most affect mankind bear always certain ineffaceable

ear-marks of their origins—the aroma, as it were, of their primitive surroundings and the best indices of the spirit and aims of their founders. The female sex, which plays so conspicuous a part in the life of Christ, is no less active in the earliest formative period of His church. On the morrow of the Ascension we find them at Joppe, a little circle of Christian seamstresses, under the care of Dorcas, paying back by the coats and garments they made the services rendered them by the deacons established to take care of the needy and neglected. Their dwellings at Jerusalem were among the first churches in which the brethren broke bread from house to house and took their meat with gladness and simplicity of heart. When Peter was delivered by the angel it was to the house of Mary, the mother of John Marcus, that he went, where many were gathered together and praying. After the dispersion of the apostles we find in the meagre records of their history numerous facts that show how important a share women had in the success of their evangelical labors. The Lady Electa would seem, according to the second epistle of St. John, to have been the centre of an important community.

I need only to refer to the ancient and venerable local traditions of Rome which preserve the memory of the relations between St. Peter and the females

of the house of Pudens, and those which concern the ancient house of Prisca on the Aventine. The Christian world has never seen devotion superior to that which the earliest Christian matrons of Rome manifested. Their praises are in Clement of Rome and the Shepherd of Hermas, i.e., in the earliest non-canonical literature of the Christians. But it is in the life of St. Paul that the Christian female apostolate finds its best-known models. This time they are taken not from the Jewish and Syrian women, the Galilæan neighbors of Christ, and the female relatives of rough fishermen, but from among the elegant and refined society of Greek cities. When St. Paul began to preach at Philippi, he spoke to the women who had assembled by the river-side to pray, no less honorable persons, no doubt, than the noble women of Thessalonica, and the still more noble and honorable women of Berœa, who shortly after received his words with joy. It was at Philippi that he met and converted Lydia of Thyatira, the purple dealer, whose heart the Lord specially opened "to attend to those things which were said by Paul," and whose hospitality and generosity the Apostle felt bound to accept.

We may believe that there was no less devotion to the Apostle among the cultivated matrons of

Ephesus and Corinth, though he was afterward obliged to utter severe reproofs to some of the latter. Yet he seems to have preserved the greatest regard for the women of Philippi, since in none of his epistles do we find stronger expressions of affection for his converts than in that to the Philippians. He calls them his joy and his crown, and in the same breath utters the names of Evodia and Syntyche. He speaks of his "sincere companion" and the other women who have labored with him and Clement in the Gospel, and whose names are written in the book of life. Among the most distinguished of his Athenian converts was the woman named Damaris. In the Epistle to the Romans he gives us an insight into the little circle of females whom he had not yet seen, but whose reputation for Christian zeal had gone abroad, like the faith of the Romans, into the whole world. There is his helper in Christ, Prisca, the same as Priscilla, the Roman Jewess who with her husband, Aquila, had befriended Paul during their exile at Corinth, who laid down their necks for him, and to whom all the churches of the Gentiles were indebted. There is Mary, "who hath labored much among you."

There are Tryphena and Tryphosa, in whom some modern critics recognize ladies of the imperial family, and Persis, "the dearly beloved, who hath much

labored in the Lord." There is the mother of Rufus, so dear to Paul that he calls her his own mother, and finally there are Julia and the sister of Nereus, together with Olympias, not counting the unnamed women of the households of Aristobulus and Narcissus, and of Nero himself. Of Mary and Persis, Tryphena and Tryphosa, he positively says that they have much labored in the Lord, and this is why he is so bold in commending to them the person and mission of their sister Phœbe, "who is in the ministry of the Church that is in Cenchrea, and who has assisted many and myself also."

This is a precious page from the earliest records of Christianity, and the names of women are inscribed on it in immortal lines. They are the mothers of the infant churches, the laborers, the helpers, the ministers, the providers, and the consolers. They are ranked by the Apostle for devotion and hard work with the bishops and priests and chief men of his missions. From the women of Rome and Philippi he no doubt received a very large share of the funds he expended on his missions and charities. They kept alive his teachings and sought out new hearers for the word of truth. By a delicate and subtle instinct woman recognized from the beginning all that Christianity meant for her, and no one labored with more zeal and intelli-

gence to spread and explain the new teachings which recognized in her an equal and opened such illimitable avenues to the exercise of her peculiar virtues and capabilities. In all the culture-lands bathed by the waters of the Mediterranean thousands of females, very frequently of the highest classes, enrolled themselves under the banner of Jesus and proceeded to revolutionize the ethnic inner life of as many thousand families.

The Roman world, as we shall see, was tolerant of a greater public freedom for women than the old Greek world. The latter, indeed, permitted them to belong to private societies of succor, insurance, amusement, and even for religious purposes, but in the former they had conquered still greater liberties. They could join the numerous corporations permitted and registered in the office of the city prefect, could even found them and preside over them. They were not forbidden to become proselytes of the Jews, nor to join the grotesque cults of Asia. This large civil and religious liberty of woman in the early imperial epoch was of the utmost benefit to the new religion. It was some time before the State suspected what Christianity meant for Gentilism, and in the meantime the propaganda had been carried on with unrelaxing zeal within and without the Empire. Everywhere it began with a few

chosen families, and everywhere the females of these families appear as very active and stirring in the furtherance of its interests. They make long journeys like Phœbe; they give abundantly like Lydia; they teach and instruct like the Philippian helpers of Paul and Clement; they give prestige and political protection like the noble dames of Thessalonica and Berœa; they are the nuclei of combat against heresy like Electa; they capture the heads of the great Roman families like Tryphena and Tryphosa; they provide shelter for the celebration of Mass like the daughters of Pudens, and they create the first landed interests of the Church by turning over to her their family cemeteries like Lucina and Priscilla and Cecilia. Columbus discovered a new world in the physical order. He broke down the mysterious ocean wall, and gave over to the intellect of man things hidden from the hoariest antiquity. But Christianity discovered a new social world when it brought forth woman from the depths of her degradation, enforced or voluntary, and placed her transmuted, purified, and elevated heart among the new psychic forces destined to alter profoundly the ancient social constitution of the world.

Outside of the canonical writings of the New Testament, the earliest record of the human Church is the noble letter written to the Corinthians by

St. Clement, the fourth Bishop of Rome. After referring to the deaths of SS. Peter and Paul, he is moved at once to glorify certain women who had suffered cruel and unholy insults for the sake of Christ, but had safely reached the goal in the race of faith and received a noble reward, feeble though they were in body. Almost, if not quite, contemporary is the shepherd of Hermas, in which earliest picture of Roman Christian society Grapte is represented as having charge of all the widows and orphans in the city, and worthy of hearing the special revelations of the shepherd angel to the ex-slave Hermas.

The apocryphal accounts of the apostolic journeys abound with traits of female devotion and energy in the Christian cause. Though they are very frequently of heretical origin, overlaid and colored with the thoughts and expressions of later ages, yet it cannot be doubted that much of their contents is historical truth. Among these apocrypha the Acts of St. Paul and Thecla are pre-eminent not only for their pathos and great age, since they existed already in the time of Tertullian, but also for the vivid picture they give us of the genesis of an apostolic conversion. Thecla is a heathen maiden of Asia Minor who happens to overhear the preaching of St. Paul on virginity and straightway accepts the Christian doctrine, to the great disgust of her mother and

lover. When Paul is banished from the city, she is condemned to be burned at the stake, but escapes miraculously and follows the Apostle to Antioch in Syria, where she is again made to undergo great sufferings for Christ's sake, and where she succeeds in converting a noble lady in whose veins flows the blood of the Ptolemies. Thecla distributes among the poor the wealth which her royal convert showers on her, and later on begins the Christian apostolate by donning male garments after receiving from St. Paul the commission to teach. Eventually she takes up her residence at Seleucia, in Asia Minor, where she gathers about her a body of Christian virgins and widows and founds one of the most famous of the early female monasteries. There are wild, incredible details in this legend, yet it is so ancient and corresponds so closely to the New Testament picture of the early Christian women that we cannot but feel that there is in it a solid substratum of truth, and that, later follies and exaggerations aside, Thecla is a true portrait of the devoted Greek women who abandoned all for Christ and His pure teachings, and gave up their lives and fortunes to the fearless propaganda of the new doctrines.

## WOMAN IN PAGAN ANTIQUITY.

A GREAT Christian writer has said that of all the victories of Christianity there is none more salutary and necessary, and at the same time none more hardly and painfully won, than that which it has gained—gained alone and everywhere—though with a daily renewed struggle, over the unregulated inclinations which stain and poison the fountains of life. Its divinity here shows itself by a triumph which no rival philosophy, no adverse doctrine, has ever equalled or will ever aspire to equal.

The improvement of the lot of woman was surely the greatest social conquest of the religion of Christ—greater even than the alleviation and abolishment of slavery. On it, as on a corner-stone, arose the new Christian society. Aristotle long since remarked that wherever the institutions that concern the female sex are faulty, the State can enjoy only a very imperfect prosperity, for the family relations are the great beams on which society reposes, and whatever tends to

strengthen them makes in the same measure for the solidity of the social framework that rests thereon. This fundamental truth had become greatly obscured in the pre-Christian ages. With a few honorable and partial exceptions the condition of woman was everywhere that of a weak and degraded being, unequal to man, existing only for his pleasure and utility. "The Christian doctrine," says Balmes in his "European Civilization," "made the existing prejudices against woman vanish forever; it made her equal to man by unity of origin and destiny and in the participation of the heavenly gifts; it enrolled her in the universal brotherhood of man with his fellows and with Jesus Christ; it considered her as the child of God, the coheiress of Jesus Christ; as the companion of man and no longer as a slave and the vile instrument of pleasure. Henceforth that philosophy which had attempted to degrade her was silenced; that unblushing literature which treated woman with so much insolence found a check in the Christian precepts and a reprimand no less eloquent than severe in the dignified manner in which all the ecclesiastical writers, in imitation of the Scriptures, expressed themselves on woman." In connection with the new and improved conditions of woman in the early Christian Church, her new dignity and responsible offices, and the consequent social

elevation which fell to her, it may be well to offer as a background a brief retrospect of her condition in ancient society.

Nearly all the ancient systems of law which have come down to us exhibit woman in a dependent position. In the Mosaic law divorce was permitted to the husband alone; the vow of a woman might be disallowed by her father or husband; daughters could only inherit in the absence of sons; the wife accused of adultery might be tried by the ordeal of bitter water. The Jew was allowed, because of the hardness of his heart, to practise polygamy, though in the post-exilic times this custom seems to have been less in vogue. Divorce was permitted for extremely frivolous reasons, though the husband was forbidden to take back the divorced woman after the death of her second husband or after a second divorce. Women were not allowed to take any active share in the worship, yet they took part in religious dances and processions, and there seems to have been religious women who voluntarily attached themselves to the temple service. While the law protected the honor and estate of the wife, the sensual and vicious Jew only too often yielded to all the vices of his abandoned Syro-Phœnician neighbors. The duties of a mother and a housewife were the chief occu-

pations of the Jewish woman; the harder labors of the field fell seldom upon her. Without being as high as her Teutonic or Christian sister, the Jewish woman stood on a higher level than the Greek. More than once she appears in the annals of her people as a deliverer in the persons of Judith, Esther, Deborah, and the like.

Much light has been thrown on the place of woman in ancient Egypt by the labors of modern scholars in deciphering the abundant mass of legal documents written in demotic characters, among which are ancient marriage contracts that go back to the eighth century B.C. From the "Cours du droit Egyptien" (Paris, 1884–86) of M. Eugène Revillout we learn that woman in the times of the early Egyptian dynasties occupied an elevated position, could contract as the equal of man, acquire, sell, and perform other legal transactions without male intervention. Not infrequently the husband was obliged to give her a mortgage on his present and future goods; she could enter into bilateral contracts with him at the usurious rate of 30 per cent., and thus eat up in a few years all his estate. Though polygamy was not forbidden, if the husband took another wife during the lifetime of the first the administration of all his present and future goods passed to the eldest son by the first marriage. The position of the wife was

guaranteed by a written notarial contract of a religious character. On the ancient Egyptian monuments the wife or "housemistress" is seen seated by the side of the husband, and the royal succession could pass to females, who were treated as the legitimate kings. But the Macedonian masters of Egypt eventually restricted the ancient Coptic freedom of the women, and gradually submitted them, in the cities at least, to the prevailing Greek laws and usages. The history of woman has few sadder pages than those which narrate the closing years of the reign of the Seleucides.

The Celtic peoples also looked upon woman as inferior to man. Though the ancient laws of Ireland have been much modified by Christian influences, the romantic literature remains yet to show us the estimation of the female sex among our ancestors. M. D'Arbois de Jubainville, in the preface to the fifth volume of his "Cours de Littérature Celtique," tells us that there were two kinds of marriage in ancient Erin, one temporary and for a year, while the other was permanent. Marriage was at all times a sale of the woman by her father, or in his stead by her nearest male relative. The children might be put to death by the father if weakly or misshapen. The wife was looked on much as the farmer considers

his sheep or cattle. One man was worth seven female slaves or twenty-one horned cattle. By the law of gavelkind they could inherit only in the absence of male heirs. Very early the laws of distress were modified in their favor. The causes of divorce were many and trivial. Women were obliged to go to war, and one of the tenderest traits of Irish history is the establishment by Adamnan of the "Law of the Innocents," by which woman and the clergy were freed from military service.

In his valuable introduction to O'Curry's "Lectures on the Manners and Customs of the Ancient Irish," Mr. W. K. Sullivan has collected a number of texts to show that among the ancient Irish the office of judge was held occasionally by women. These were perhaps akin to the mysterious and influential Druidesses of Gaul and the Teutonic prophetesses. Some faint trace of these Matriarchs or "Women of the Judgments" has come down to us in the "sovereign lady of the thoughts" of the mediæval knight and the female judges in the Courts of Love.

Aristotle is witness, in his Poetics, that among barbarian peoples woman and the slave were on the same footing, and whoever takes the pains to read Westermarck's "History of Human Marriage" (London, 1892) will find collected there a mass of details from the history of ancient and modern uncivilized

peoples that amply justify the assertion of the Greek philosopher. Among the peoples of the extreme Orient woman has always occupied an inferior position. It is not necessary to indicate here what degradation Islam has brought to woman. Let us look at the "Sacred Books of the East" in the splendid translation brought out under the supervision of Max Mueller. Everywhere in Persia, India, and China woman is a being of inferior quality, existing only for the pleasure and comfort of man, and obtaining her salvation only through him. According to the "Institutes of Vishnu" a woman cannot be a witness and cannot execute a legal document. Her duty is to live in harmony with her husband, prepare his food, to collect wealth, to be careful and saving in her habits, to lead a reserved life, and never undertake to act by herself. She is forever under the guardianship of some male, as, indeed, were women in the Scandinavian kingdoms until modern times. Her only hope of eternal bliss is in the absolute subjection to her husband. Add to this that her life was filled with a thousand superstitious practices. Though these laws say that she is to be honored by the family, especially on holidays and festivals, and that the curse of an ill-treated woman wreaks ruin, yet, according to them, she is evidently only a higher servant of man, whose interests are

paramount at all times. The "Laws of Manu" (fifth century B.C.) are the most ancient code of Hindoo jurisprudence we possess. They represent woman as unfit for freedom, a wrathful, dishonest, malicious being, whose mutable temper and natural heartlessness make it necessary to keep her in dependence night and day. "In childhood a female must be subject to her father, in youth to her husband, when her lord is dead to her sons—a woman must never be independent. . . . Though destitute of virtue, or seeking pleasure elsewhere, or devoid of good qualities, a husband must be constantly worshipped as a god by a faithful wife. . . . Through their passion for men, through their mutable temper, through their natural heartlessness they become disloyal towards their husbands, however carefully they may be guarded in this world. Knowing their disposition, which the Lord of creatures laid in them at the creation, to be such, every man should most strenuously exert himself to guard them."

One of the weakest sides of the old Hellenic world was the low view it took of the nature and calling of woman. We have no perfect record of her state in Hellenic society, but such details as can be collected from the ancient writers and the monuments may be found in the "Heathenism and Judaism" of Doel-

linger and in the antiquarian romance of "Charicles" by Professor Becker. She was little esteemed and treated as a child, shut out from social life and confined to the women's apartments, or *gynæconitis*, which was often locked by the husband on his departure. He rarely ate with his family, and if visitors came the wife dared not appear. Special officers were deputed to look after the women. They could not go out unaccompanied, and in some cities durst not stir abroad until sunset. They were a lower order of beings, neglected by nature in heart and intellect, prone to evil, only fitted for the pleasure of the lords of creation. Greek literature abounds with mockery and *persiflage* of woman, and this tone is observable not only in the mysogonist Euripides and the comedian Menander, but even in the grave philosopher Aristotle, who deliberately rates her as man's inferior, more than a slave or a child, yet without any of the necessary political virtues—neither courageous nor just. Where her dower was great or her natural character strong she might create a more tolerable position for herself. But such cases were few. We rarely hear of the Greek woman in political life. She was legally a minor for life, could conclude no bargain or transaction on her own account. Whatever a man did by the counsel or request of a woman was void of legal value.

There was no provision for her education—it was given by the mother and consisted of the merest domestic instruction, with some knowledge of music and dancing. The mind was undeveloped, for all public intercourse was forbidden by law or custom. The Greek maiden up to the day of her marriage lived in the utmost seclusion, and from thenceforth was busied with the cares of the household—the clothes, stores and kitchens, the children, the slaves and the sick. She was thrown back on her own thoughts and on the company of her still weaker dependents. Both Aristotle and Sophocles were of opinion that

"A modest silence is the honor of woman."

And Pericles was of the opinion that the chief care of Athenian women ought to be that neither good nor evil should be spoken of them—utter self-effacement. The condition of woman at Rome was much superior to that which she held in the Greek lands. We are not speaking here of the multitude of female slaves whose unions the law did not recognize. But for the free-born woman marriage meant a life-long union, with mutual joys and sorrows and equal obligations. She had a share in all that belonged to the husband and participated in certain religious acts. She was absolute mistress of the household,

the instructress of the children and the guardian of the domestic honor. In the later times of the republic she could appear in court and give evidence or offer her intercession. She visited freely the theatres, banquets, and baths. The original jurisprudence had been very severe, however, in her regard. She was by marriage completely in the power of the husband, only his daughter before the law. He might punish or even slay her with slight formality. The ancient laws of Rome contemplated for her, like the laws of India and Scandinavia, a life-long guardianship. But in time she avoided both the husband's power and the agnatic control by successive favorable interpretations of the old laws, and at the time of Christ had almost completely emancipated herself from any male control of her person or fortune. Her influence was felt in the imperial household, the army and the public administration. She was dictatrix of fashion and entered freely all corporations. Then began that gigantic debauch which fills those pages of history that narrate the decay of the republican and the rise of imperial Rome. The Roman women were the mistresses of the masters of the world. The treasures of the vanquished lay at their feet and every powerful passion found a facile satisfaction. The tributes of nations were squandered on their adornment, and some writers trace

one cause of the later financial crash under Diocletian to the vast sums of gold shipped to the Orient for rare jewels and stuffs. Divorces became the order of the day. Many Roman dames counted their years by their marriages. The population decreased and the public morality was at its lowest ebb. It was in vain that the emperors attempted to stem the growing evils—the degradation of woman had gone too far. The names of Clodia, Julia, Messalina, recall the most shameful pages of the history of morals. Such writers as Friedlaender and Baudrillart have described this glittering period of decay with a masterly touch, but nothing can surpass the fierce, dark, suppressed wrath of the contemporary aristocrat Tacitus as he depicts for us the sublimely wicked orgies of the female world of his time. The absence of any serious instruction, the idle futile life at such splendid seaside resorts as Baiæ, the shameless excesses of the theatres, the obscene mimic plays, the world of Oriental singers, dancers, and jugglers who filled the city, the cruelty of the gladiatorial games, the darkened consciences of the men who administered the world from the Palatine hill, the countless mob of slaves and flatterers, had all combined to utterly destroy the female character at Rome when the light of the Gospel first shed its mild beams on the most glorious and most wicked of the seats of men.

Yet it was in that very city of Rome and among those same Roman matrons that Jesus Christ was soon to make his most brilliant conquests. As though they had touched the very depths of the moral abyss, a reaction had been setting in within the higher circles of the Roman female world. The spiritual teachings of Judaism and its simple direct monotheism had won many a woman's heart, sick of gold and power and blood, thirsting for the higher goods of life. They were not strangers to philosophy. The books of Plato and the Stoics were often noticed on the silken cushions of their luxurious couches. Outside those who were swept away in the mad swirl of society were many who did not belie the grave religiosity of the ancient Roman woman, who followed every new light and prayed now to Venus and Diana, now to Isis and Cybele, until they recognized in the teachings of the crucified Jew the celestial balm for their agitated and blindly suffering hearts. From that time they threw themselves with the most splendid enthusiasm into the work of Christian proselytism. At every step in the early history of the Roman Church we are struck by the figures of grave devoted matrons, whose houses are turned into churches, whose family sepulchres are made burial grounds for the Christian multitude, who lavish their enormous

wealth to support poor Christians at the ends of the earth, who are prodigal of self-sacrifice, and co-operate in modest but active devotion to rear the City of God within the City of Antichrist.

In the pages of Tacitus we read of the retirement from society of Pomponia Græcina, and modern criticism has recognized in her one of the first Roman converts to Christianity. Among those of Cæsar's household of whom St. Paul speaks with respectful tenderness were two women, bound to Vespasian and Domitian by close ties of blood, the two Flaviæ Domitillæ. The noble Petronilla, of the same Aurelian stock, was another member of the gentle sweet-tempered band. The mysterious Lucina, whose memory is yet so fresh at Rome, was another, perhaps a guiding spirit, the strange name, no doubt, hiding some prouder patronymic. The archæologist gets vague glimpses of other noble dames whom the sublime simplicity, sweetness, and fulness of Christ's teachings had won, but he does not talk of them to an incredulous world until he has the irrefragable proofs in hand. He believes that the Balbi, the Probi, the Bassi, the Glabriones were in part already Christian, and the stones of the catacombs are yielding up the evidences—their own Christian epitaphs.

## ST. AGNES OF ROME.[1]

THERE is something astounding, overwhelming, in the reflection that sixteen hundred years after her death the memory of a gentle maiden of old Rome should yet be a potent spiritual watchword throughout the world; should suffice, for example, to arrest the thoughts and move the hearts of a great multitude of men and women in the very core of this newest and greatest of world-cities. The imagination is confused and thrown back upon itself when it tries to seize, on the one hand, the spectacle of the Golden City by the Tiber, so long the royal mistress of the habitable or civilized world of antiquity, and, on the other, the youthful representative of triumphant democracy, exulting in the sense of destiny, glowing with consciousness of power, throbbing with a thousand mighty energies—without a doubt the highest expression of organized humanity since the sceptre fell from the aged hand of Rome and the eagles of victory fled from her tottering banners.

[1] Sermon preached in St. Agnes' Church, New York, January 26, 1902.

Indeed, it is a long cry from the newest to the oldest; from the head of the vast procession of civilization to the far horizon where it was first organized and set in motion. As we gaze on the scene the mind is troubled by infinite comparison and suggestion and the heart is equally solicited by considerations of the most far-reaching and pregnant character.

What is there in common between the latest phase of human society and that terrible decade of expiring polytheism when a half dozen barbarian emperors of Rome disputed, for the last time, the onward march of Christianity? It would seem that in the multitude of changes that have followed one another since those decisive days, nothing could have remained the same. States and cultures, languages and literatures, have driven one another off the stage without ceasing; the stage of life itself has been widened beyond the wildest suspicions of the ancients. Time and space, the common equipment of humanity, have no longer the same meaning as in the days of St. Agnes.

Though it is a trite, still it is a true observation, that only one institution—the Catholic Church—remains to bind us with the old Roman state.

This it does by its long history of teaching and governing, its continuous and conscious self-identity, its genuine and effective love of our common human-

ity, its unremitting efforts to uplift to a high level every estate and condition of that humanity. It is the only cosmopolitan force that has survived the revolutions of nigh two thousand years. In the light of this indisputable fact we may well believe the immemorial contention of Christian philosophers and historians that the Roman Empire itself was raised up by God to prepare the way for a religion that should embrace all men, and dominate all time, and overcome all limitations of space, all human barriers of whatever kind.

For that reason we rightly maintain that the glories and the humiliations of this religion, its victories and its defeats, its progress and its decay, its difficulties and its problems, are of interest to all mankind. They are all pages from the story of a society that transcends, now as then, all common conditions of mankind, and offers on earth a weak but real image of that heavenly city where there is no more history, for there is no more time; no more discord, for all is perfect love; no more wrong, for the Sun of Justice is its light; no more ambition, for the vision of the All-Holy and the All-Good fills up the measure of each one's desire. Alone, the Catholic religion, by the conquest of all hearts, has planted therein this idea of a common humanity, has elevated to the power of universal forces a passion for the ab-

stract right, a living irresistible enthusiasm for goodness, a sure and permanent public opinion that eats away injustice like an acid. Before she appeared on this earth, noble intellects had dimly seen the outlines of goodness and truth, had even set down in immortal Greek and Latin ideals of justice and sanctity, had vaguely grasped the notion of a common humanity where equality should reign and earthly happiness should be absolute. But these were the Utopian dreams of a few thinkers who walked apart from the rest of men, and their thoughts were cold, inefficient, sterile, like the efforts of a sorely wounded man to better his condition. With inevitable rapidity the whole situation changed after the death of Jesus Christ. At once there seemed to be let loose among men a tide, as it were, of personal goodness that made its way into every condition of ancient life. Within a hundred years of His death there could be seen in every city of the Empire men and women whose lives would have ravished the admiration of Pythagoras and Socrates. By multitudes they accepted and lived out in their daily lives sublime formulæ of conduct that were lately the despair of the most learned and virtuous. Mysteriously, but surely and easily, the secret of a just holy and upright life had been found.

Some sweet, strong, healing light had burst in upon all ranks and estates of mankind. Men and women were everywhere rising from a spiritual death and walking freely and joyously in a conscious restoration to life and well-being. So it went on for centuries, without boastfulness or arrogance, but also without flinching—from talking about a perfect life men and women had begun to live that perfect life.

In the light of our transmuted views and opinions one would think that they should have met with universal admiration, yet it was the contrary. The annals of history do not record any wilder, more general and unreasoning opposition of man to man than the story of the first three centuries of the Catholic religion. Its pious, God-fearing, law-abiding, innocent members were hunted like wild beasts, now by the mobs of great cities, now by the state itself, now by the powerful and numerous jewries of the time, now by their own families and relatives. To be a Christian was to live an object of contumely and hatred, to walk always in the shadow of a sudden and cruel death, an outlaw in the society that had cast down all barriers between men, an exile in a community of 100,000,000 of citizens.

Every engine of force, every form of social compulsion, every influence of literature, every imag-

inable constraint of a penal character, was set in motion to overcome these Christian men and women of long ago, so long ago that the ordinary imagination reaches thither with difficulty.

But force and complusion were, for the first time in human history, insufficient. In the long and awful appeal to public opinion the Christian virtues at last won the day as against the political virtues of Greece and Rome. The mild and gentle figure of the Good Shepherd was set up in New Rome that consecrated the victory, and in the Old Rome the cross of Jesus Christ replaced the Roman lance in the hand of Constantine.

The prisons gave up their Christian inmates; the executioners laid down their cruel irons; the mines of Spain and Africa and Palestine sent forth from their cold recesses the followers of Jesus. East and west the deserts and the mountains and the islands of the seas swelled the processions of men and women who returned in multitudes to their homes, singing canticles of joy and gratitude.

> "Sound the loud timbrel o'er Egypt's dark sea,
> Jehovah has triumphed, His people are free."

It was the first general conflict of the Catholic Church with the power and spirit of the world. And if you reflect a moment on all that it meant for her you will not wonder that she cherishes dearly the

names of all the great combatants who fell on her side, that for her they are dearer than the heroes of Marathon or Thermopylæ; that for them she finds forever fresh accents of praise that surpass the eloquence even of Pericles. Henceforth it is as clear as the sun in heaven that there are two orders—the spiritual and the temporal, and that the latter cannot force the former, cannot extirpate or assimilate it. The precept of Jesus Christ, "Give unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's, and unto God the things that are God's," is now written by Cæsar on the books of his own law. At last there is an impregnable rock of personal freedom, the conscience of man and woman, a fortress conquered for humanity by every frail girl who laid her head on the block for love of Jesus, by every noble matron who renounced the good things of earth to join in heaven the company of the blessed. When it came to that pass that in every city of the Roman world women and children of every rank sought death with equal avidity, it was clear to all right-thinking Roman men that the bases of their state were long since rotten and that its ruin or its transformation was at hand.

The martyrs had died for Jesus Christ as God; thereby they overthrew polytheism, by the consent of all an inferior and degrading religion and the root of all superstition.

The civilized world had henceforth a correct idea of God whereby to regulate the relations of mankind with its Creator and Preserver. The martyrs died for the divinity of Jesus Christ and for the reality of His human nature. Thereby they were for the Church the highest and for all time the most efficient witness of the fundamental doctrines of Christianity. By their death the ancient world was cleared of a thousand horrid bloody customs, institutions, and public vices. And if the eyes of the more spiritual and mystic Christians were not destined ever to see the New Jerusalem on earth, they did see the triumph of truth and virtue and the downfall of oppression and hypocrisy. At last the taunt of the pagan was silenced—the God of the Christians did move to succor them. At Saxa Rubra by the Milvian Bridge, near Rome, the sun went down on one world, the world of paganism, and rose on another, the world of Christianity. As time wore on, the Church saw clearly that her own history was one of the surest means of consolation and guidance. The era of the martyrs was like the first epoch of her vast career, and furnished her with an absolute and certain proof that the Holy Spirit was with her, that Jesus Christ was truly living and reigning in the world, that the divine Father had not forgotten His children even in the furnace of tribulation.

Those three centuries of severest trial stand out henceforth in the life of the Church as a corner-stone of fact, a bed-rock of conviction, a "pillar and foundation" of her confidence in the final success of her mission, her teaching, her ideals.

After all every martyrdom was in its own true way a repetition of the sublime sacrifice of Jesus Christ on Calvary. Jesus Christ was the king of the martyrs, and His death the result of the union of the powers of the world—Herod and Pilate and Caiphas—to repress the only religious teaching that could unite all mankind in an intimate and beneficent way with the common Father of all. With the Christian martyrs began that wonderful Imitation of Christ that since then has never failed to win numberless adherents. It was along this painful way that Jesus drew upward to Himself His first adherents. When we open the blood-stained pages of their trials and deaths, it is the figure of Jesus that dominates the scene. For His name they die; usually they need only utter the one word, "I am a Christian," to seal their doom.

In the prisons His Passion is read to them by the servants of the Church, His encouragements to firmness are repeated, His example set before them. On the way to the scene of death they chant His power and glory, His beauty and goodness. Many times

He appears to them in their noisome dungeons that for the moment are transformed into halls of light and joy. In the heart-rending agonies of execution they often fall into an ecstatic state and pass away sustained by the immediate presence of their Lord and Master.

The ignorant and dull become quick-witted in their replies to the great and learned of Rome; the timid and the humble are filled with a vigor and boldness that more than aught else troubled the masterful authorities of a city that had hitherto broken every resistance, and now stood puzzled and worried before this new line of opposition that defied all her ancient and approved arts of government.

Amid the gasping and the moaning of the victims the Holy Spirit often seized the hearts of the by-standers and impelled the nobler among them to step forward and take the places of the dying, proclaiming that they believed in the truth and usefulness of a religion whose followers were ready to die for it. For ten who gave up their lives as many more went down into the arena and emphasized the new and revolutionizing truth that any human government must henceforth be ready to perish in a sustained conflict with genuine faith in Christ Jesus, Son of God, Saviour of men, risen from the dead, reigning in heaven at the right hand of the Father.

Finally, their precious remains were laid away in the deep and kind bosom of mother earth, with the psalms, chants, and prayers that we yet repeat over our dead. More frequently their name and fame were left to God—why imitate the pompous inscriptions of those pagans above ground? Here in these dark, silent halls the angels would easily find their own. At most a rude line or two, some symbol of faith and hope, like an anchor or a dove or a palm-branch, some fond word of a parent, brother, or sister, perhaps a lover—Farewell, sweet soul! Farewell, most dear companion! No note of hatred or rancor, no legacy of revenge, no phrase of cynicism or pessimism. These were precisely the enemies that they had worsted, each one, in his or her memorable duel with the crowned and sceptred Death above them.

And when it was all over, when the bloody work of the day was done, the court-room closed, the lawyers and executioners gone to their rest, and the laboring spirit freed from its maimed and broken shell, faithful men wrote down the sublime story and bedewed the parchment with tears, not of sorrow, but of joy; for they wrote no story of death, but of birth, rebirth in Christ Jesus—the *Natalis dies*, or birthday of the martyr.

The following Sunday the remnant of the Church,

like the survivors of a great storm, gathered in their meeting-place and at the appointed time there rose up the deacon of the little body. He read the proceedings of the martyr's death and note was taken of the day, and the bishop from his seat gave due praise in the name of the community and urged all present to equal steadfastness, for sin was abundant and scandal frequent, and life was short and uncertain, and they bore about the great treasure of faith and constancy in vessels of fragile clay.

Doubtless more than one will wonder what could sustain men and women in such incredible sufferings. Their love of Jesus Christ was very personal and immediate—they were His by a baptism that had made a deep impression on them, since it cut away and destroyed the awful burdens of the past. He was to them the pure Sun of Justice in a world of obscenity, sin, and oppression of every kind. He was the sole object worthy of affection to those who had tasted of all the world's pleasures, but in vain, and found the soul's thirst quenched by Him alone. A multitude of men and women felt their state, with all its greatness, hastening to decay and ruin, and themselves with it. In the possession of the Holy Spirit of God they found the assurance of personal salvation amid circumstances that everywhere threatened the end of all things. Daily they read the

Scriptures of the Old and the New Testament. In the latter they found the absolute exemplar of their lives, the solution of the moral or ethical problems of their times, the proof and evidence of faith in Jesus Christ, a mysterious fountain of graces flowing from the lips of that divine Master. They found in it the warrant of the mysterious banquet where they replenished their spiritual strength and felt themselves intimately one with the risen and triumphant Christ. A sense of joy and victory, spiritual indeed, but habitual, pervaded their lives and made them more often dwellers in the world of heaven than in that of earth.

Did they read daily the Psalms of the Old Testament? In spite of the rude semi-popular translations into the Greek and Latin of the streets and the public places, the shops and the wharves, they found therein the person of Jesus Christ described in advance by the Royal Singer of Israel. Deep in their hearts they cherished these marvellous prophecies as the corner-stone of faith, and they rose from hearing them with enkindled resolution and a contempt for the flimsy apparatus of religion that was thrust upon them by pagan society.

And were not their sorrows like those of Christ foretold by the holy David ?

The philosophy of affliction, that exudes from the

Psalms like some strong balm or ointment, fell upon ardent and expectant souls. They were transfigured by it and came forth among men no longer the citizens of a low and mean earth, but the citizens of a city not built by hands, and members of the Jerusalem that is above.

Now they knew what history meant, whither humanity was drifting, what was the reason of evil and sorrow, what were its remedies, what the purpose of life, what the utility, the reason of death. Each in his or her own soul walked with the holy prophet through the valley of doubt and temptation and came out with him on the sunny uplands of faith and hope and love. Religion became an intimately personal thing with them, and in their transmuted hearts there was no longer a place for the goods of the world that hated the one thing they held dear, and pursued it to exterminate it.

This world was sunk in malignity when it was not rotten to the core. It was blind, perverse, unjust. One ray shone through its accumulating iniquity and revealed in light inaccessible a wise and holy Judge, at whose bar the multitudinous wrongs of human life should be redressed. Now they were dwellers in mighty Babylon where all things offended them, but there stood the two open doors of death, natural and violent, through either of which

they would gladly walk when it was the Father's will.

In reality this long multitudinous conflict was between a society that believed only in this world and a society that believed in a world to come; between men and women who believed that the silent grave was the sure end of life, and other men and women who believed that it was only the vestibule of life; between a society built on the rock of Christian faith and one founded on the weak and shifting opinions and devices of men. The former had a government, a philosophy, an ethics, a literature, an art, all based on the principle that beyond this earth there was no other existence, or at least none that man could certainly know and usefully strive for. In time the highest and sole ideal, the only sufficient scope, of human activity, came to be the common weal, the social fabric, the state itself. In one way or another the civil order became the real god of that old society into which East and West had been for centuries merging around the Mediterranean. Compromise and concession were its ordinary weapons in all that pertained to the other world, a growing tolerance and indifference of religious belief. So long as the official ritual of the state's inherited religion was acknowledged, the subject of the state might adore with impunity one god or ten thousand,

might follow the dictates of pure philosophy or the wildest extravagances of Oriental worship. But now there had been growing in the very heart of that ancient state, under the shadow of its oldest monuments and symbols, a new view of man's relations to the other world. The Christian held that the one and only God had revealed Himself and His will to all mankind; that He had done this, indeed, many centuries before, though in an imperfect way, and to one people alone; that now He had made Himself known to the whole world through His beloved Son Jesus Christ; that this Son of God had really dwelt among men in the flesh and had died for their redemption; that He had renewed the ancient divine laws against the false, debasing worship of many gods, and had left a new and perfect code of conduct based on His own absolutely holy life; that the religious element in life and society was the indispensable one; that instead of being the last care of the social authority, what we thought of God should be the foremost, as being the true source of perfect morality and the only reliable bond of human society itself.

From the laws and justice of the Roman state they appealed to the higher law, the original justice of the Creator of all men. Year in and year out, at the tribunal of prætor or proconsul, they convoked these

judges to meet them on a certain day—the Last Day —before an omniscient, holy, and impartial Judge. So intense was their belief in the immortality of the individual soul, in the truth of the divine promises of Jesus, in the moral horror of the social life about them that they threw their lives from them as a worn garment, and in every violent death saw a triumph more far-reaching than any Alexander or Cæsar had ever won. To their eyes the average world about them was so sunk in vice and wrong, so lost to the most ordinary sentiments of truth and justice, so conscienceless in all that pertained to the plain duties of man towards his Creator and Preserver, so blind to the simplest obligations of respect and service of the True God, that to longer stay in such a world was unbearable, and the hour of their dissolution a welcome and blessed hour. On the other hand, the pagan society looked on them as a genuine curse of life. The irreligious but superstitious mob of every city made them responsible for all the natural misfortunes of the time—famine, pestilence, flood, conflagration—and decimated them again and again in its fits of ungovernable fury. The thinkers, the magistrates, and the philosophers might smile at the reasoning of the mob, but they put the Christian to death for a reason of a higher order—he denied the sole and absolute supremacy of the state. His

real crime was his political, not his religious, obstinacy, what they held to be his perverse stubbornness in face of the social order itself. He dared to maintain a higher principle than was known to the public authority, and to set his personal conviction above the common reason of the community. In other words, the Christian martyr contended for a new thing in the history of humanity, for liberty of conscience. No more perfect formulæ of that great principle were ever uttered than were put forth in those days by the learned men of the Christians. All men know how the memorable conflict ended with the triumph of Christianity—the blessed Agnes herself was one of the last victims of the cruel struggle, though so glorious a one that all Christianity forever repeats the praises of the delicate maiden who witnessed so successfully for Jesus Christ.

Nevertheless, paganism, though driven from the public offices and places of honor, was far from vanquished. Historians draw for us a vivid picture of the long conflicts that it sustained before it yielded all hope of a formal reinstatement. And when, at last, it saw the Roman world finally Christian, it saw also the coarser forms of its own religion coming from the mysterious homes of barbarism to contest with Christianity the peaceful possession of its conquest.

For a thousand years, indeed, during the long epoch that was the childhood and youth of the great modern nations, the political control of the world was wrested from the hands of paganism. Men believed in a Christendom, an earthly society of all Christian peoples bound in amity and charity and mutual helpfulness, inspired by the Gospel of Jesus Christ and the spirit of His holy Church, whose aim was the life eternal with God and His saints, whose ideals were all spiritual, grandiose, uplifting man out of the narrowness and insufficiency of this life. But when the barbarian nations had been led by the hand of the mediæval Church within the reach of the culture and perfection of old Greece and Rome, the evil principles and corrupting spirit of paganism that had never utterly died away began to reassert themselves. They had only seemed to die—in their monuments, in their literature, in the praxis of government, in the letter of law, in the human heart itself, they had found a safe and untroubled refuge.

So it is now four hundred years that the original conflict of Christianity and paganism is again on the stage of life. This is the last and irreducible formula or law that explains sufficiently the phenomena of political, social, and religious changes that fill the pages of all modern history. Grad-

ually the measure of human duty, responsibility, endeavor, of the scope and purposes of life, of all idealism, of the nature and uses of pleasure, of the place and calling of the human body, of the sacredness and solemnity of human life, has been made to square with the conviction that with the death of the body there is an end of all things. I know that there are many forms of this genuine materialism and atheism, ranging from the crassest and vilest to the most refined and elegant. So, too, in the days of St. Agnes there were representatives of the earthly philosophy of Epicurus who spoke in language of varying degrees of frankness—yet they were all disciples of personal pleasure and comfort, and each saw in her an example of monumental folly. In the measure that the unity and authority, the prestige and social action of the Catholic Church have grown weak the temper and the forms of paganism have grown strong. Gradually the ground is being cleared of all the middle forms of Christianity. A minority falls away to Catholicism, the great majority accept the yoke of paganism. There is no truer expression of human life than the average literature of the day. Outside of the Catholic Church, does it not bear, to a very great extent, the hallmark of paganism? Will any one maintain that in the

average romance or novel, in biography, history, travel, in philosophy and social studies, the principles and the spirit of Christianity are prevalent? In our great universities, every one of them straining to run a glorious race in the near future, every one, or nearly every one of them, endowed with means that a century ago would have looked fabulous, is Christian theology honored, represented by strong and large and earnest faculties, or is it not rather said that there is no use for Christian theology in our busy material world, since it does not always bring material gain and advantage? Can any one who has an inkling of the history of institutions doubt that it is the great universities of the land that fashion its future? Must a prophet arise to make this clear to Catholics? What the universities think and say to-day are to-morrow principles of action for the multitude. Little by little, in every state, the popular education is being shaped by them, i.e., the temper and the ideals of the whole people. What their brilliant writers, investigators, orators, inventors, poets, their men of high and fascinating genius, their masters of English style and their teachers of trenchant personality, hold forth to an admiring world as the true values of life, as the real remedies for our woes and sorrows, as the sure keys

to the problems that have been agitating mankind for untold centuries, will surely be believed. And being believed, with the simple directness of our American people, these thoughts will soon be put into action, and so our institutions and habits, our views of God and man and society, in an incredibly short time, will differ but little from those of a Petronius or a Gallio.

Oh, beware! you who have fought, yourselves and your ancestors, for many a long and hopeless decade the good fight for the saving teachings of the Holy Catholic Church; beware how you abandon them lightly at the opening of the great new temporal life that lies before us! In many ways it is a new heaven and a new earth that unfold their charms and their possibilities, but of what value will it all be if in the ages to come the corrupting principles of paganism, its fatal philosophy of the sufficiency of this life, once more work the ruin that lies to its discredit in the past? Step by step, through this His holy Church, ordinarily, Jesus Christ gave back to mankind the original freedom and happiness that paganism had destroyed. His Holy Spirit breathed continuously on the moribund society of the ancients, and lo! bondage and slavery lost their real sting, and human equality was proclaimed—the first and only genuine Dec-

laration of the Rights of Man. Human labor was sanctified by the daily toil of the Man-God, and poverty was no longer a stigma when He had chosen it for His bride. In Him the native dignity of man was restored.

"Christianity sanctified each individual," says one of the greatest of our historians, "inasmuch as it taught him to live and die for Christ. It sanctified the family, because it thoroughly penetrated domestic life, and filled it with the aroma of piety and devotion. It sanctified the married couple, the children, the household, by binding them together in true mutual love; thereby, little by little, all society was gradually transformed by it from within, filled with hitherto unsuspected ideas, and fitted out with new strength and capacity. The Church was the herald and intermediary of a superior morality and culture; she gave back again to the slave the dignity of man; she ennobled daily toil, hitherto so despised; she called the poor and humble to the side of the rich and noble, and designated them as the equals of the latter; she taught man how to despise at once the advantages of life and the terrors of death. Through her, humility, continency, and chastity became honorable things. She created new men and filled them with new life, made them conscientious citizens,

true fathers, loving children, trustworthy servants, characters truly great and noble in every state of life. In all of these she formed the Christian ideal, and went on forever finishing and perfecting it. In the midst of ancient society she opened an ever-flowing fountain of consolation and spiritual elevation for all the oppressed and unfortunate. Very truly indeed she renovated the face of the world."

Moreover, Jesus Christ made each one responsible for his brother, thereby wiping out that awful Cain-like principle that each one must suffice for himself. Is not this the right of the strongest, the diabolical philosophy that life and its joys and duties are only to the strong, that the fiercest competition in trade is as permissible as the fiercest struggle for political supremacy — only, woe to the conquered! Oh, no! the divine eyes of Jesus swept the whole stage of life, and He enunciated a law that must forever dominate all Christian energizings and activities of whatever kind, the law of charity, the Golden Rule, the principle of a common brotherhood, the conviction of a mutual responsibility as members of one great family raised by the Death of the Man-God from the depth of degradation to the vision of God Himself. In that society the death of a little maiden for

the common good is as ennobling and generous an act as the death of a Socrates or a Thrasea Pætus—nay, more so, for she has found an army of imitators where the martyr of Philosophy and the martyr of the Republic stood almost alone. They died for themselves, and their example was sterile;—for, sublime as was their death, it was the death of mere men. But in Agnes, by the holy and sublime law of Christian association, every true follower of Jesus dies for Him in spirit and desire, because, weak as was the body and tender the age of the martyr, she was indissolubly bound in common membership with all true Christians beneath one common head, Christ Jesus.

Dearly beloved brethren, it is long since we have known what it is to endure suffering in our bodies for the sake of our religion, long since we have made acquaintance with the dungeon, the stake, the block, political and social ostracism, the estate of the pariah and wanderer among men for the cause of faith. Perhaps this is one reason why the eyes of the Christian faith are no longer as keen as of old, why we no longer scent danger where it abounds. The tide of paganism rises about us, in art, in education, in the life of the common man that is lived out in industry and

commerce, in political principles and situations, in views of God, man, the soul, society, life and death—what they are, why they are, and what is the just and proper attitude of each individual towards them. We are, unconsciously perhaps, unlearning at a rapid rate the old Christian philosophy of life and putting in its place a new and un-Christian, one day to be anti-Christian, philosophy. Think you that when the hour of trial comes, as it must come, when the usual stern call goes forth for the choosing between this life and the life to come, we shall all share the principles and be ensouled by the spirit of St. Agnes? Is it possible that, as long ago in the rich and populous cities of Carthage and Alexandria, so, too, in this great world-city, only a small number shall be found steadfast, faithful unto death in whatever form it may come? If so, it will be because we, their predecessors, fell away, in our hearts, in our admirations, in our compromises and complacencies, to the essence of paganism—its spirit. For the multitudes, under any form of government, that spirit means the pleasures and comforts of this life. In the measure that we adore these things we belong to the persecutors of Agnes, since now, as then, there is no middle way. Is it necessary to add that pleasure, for societies as

well as for individuals, ends in weariness and emptiness, in a ruinous scepticism, and that hitherto every society infested with scepticism has gone to the wall in conflict with a society inspired by faith?

The saints of Catholicism are rightly cherished by us for their superior virtue, for their merits before God and man, for their imitation now of one phase, now of another of the life of Jesus Christ. But no few of them are forever memorable as symbols and types, as summing up in their persons and careers whole epochs of conflict, great permanent interests of religion, immovable principles of conduct, solemn and fundamental lines of righteousness. It is a great warfare that the Catholic Church carries on from century to century, and she needs great landmarks or monuments to look up to, amid the dust and changes of a battle that is forever shifting its field or arena, but never its stake and meaning. An Athanasius, struggling single-handed against a world of opponents for the divinity of Jesus Christ, is forever a fixed star of hope in her firmament. A Gregory the Seventh dying in exile and abandonment for the liberty of holy Church rouses forever her courage in the centuries that follow. A Thomas of Aquino moving with dignity

and equity between the contending claims of reason and authority is forever a guide in long centuries of scholastic discord and mental confusion.

In the story of St. Agnes we may behold one phase of the long conflict with paganism—the triumph of Christianity over the obscenity and impurity of the ancient life. Not, indeed, that carnal wickedness no more existed, but it was driven from the seat of authority. It was henceforth personal, individual, not a public and approved power. It was no longer enthroned in the very temples of religion, no longer the chief social factor in human life. It was compelled to hide its face and walk abashed and degraded. It was hunted away from the presence of children and growing youth. Its vile public worship was a thing of the past; its pestilential breath no more infested shamelessly the haunts of men—the streets and squares and meeting-places. For long, long centuries the philosophy of polytheism had been drifting into an apotheosis of the flesh and all its lower and more perilous instincts. It had become as a very Moloch to whom all the higher goods of life had been sacrificed—modesty, chastity, self-respect, the intimate inborn sense of human dignity. It had defied all law, and set itself in the place of law under the guise of ancient

and common custom. Slowly, but surely, it had extinguished in the statesmen the light of wisdom, in the army the love of fatherland, in the family the sanctity of natural affection. Look nowhere else for the decline of the greatest state of antiquity, in some respects the noblest creation of human genius! Deliberately it walked down from the heights into the poisonous valley of death. It was most certainly ruined by its own impurities, but above all by its adoration of merely carnal instincts and passions. This is always the last word of paganism, which is a religion of descending and destructive forces, never of uplifting and constructive energies. The paganism of Rome had an innate contempt and fierce hatred for the Christian doctrine and discipline of virginity—many of the most famous Christian martyrs were made to perish because they would not adore the shameless gods and goddesses of the common brothel. And so the Catholic Church has always looked with especial fondness and pride on the last victim of genuine pagan secularism, St. Agnes. In this weak body, in this brief span of years, what a superior moral beauty, what an incredible wisdom! After that scene of blood, every Christian priest could stand forth and cry out that the very children of Catholicism could

overcome the hosts of paganism. It was, no doubt, amid tears of joy that the Sunday after her death the Bishop of Rome recalled the wonderful steadfastness of the purest, noblest, and sweetest maiden of the community, and that every listener felt that Jesus Christ was visibly and lovingly present with them. What they could not know was that relief was near, that they had already won the victory. But in the wonderful and loving justice of God the symbol of that victory, the name that through sixteen centuries should express to all men and women the real meaning of the persecution of the Christian religion by the Roman state in its own glorious seat of power, was the name of Agnes—of all names the one least dreaded by the civil power of Rome. And yet this was eminently just, for she symbolized Christian morality, with all its freshness, wholesomeness, and helpfulness, while the City of Rome, in that day, stood for all that was contrary to the real well-being of its citizens, the solid growth of the body politic and the inalienable freedom of the human conscience.

## THE CHURCH AND THE EMPIRE A.D. 250–312.

WHAT was the actual condition of the Christian Church when, early in the fourth century, the Edicts of Nicomedia were issued against her? The question is an extremely important one, for in the succeeding age imperial favor, subtlest heresies, multitudes of semi-Christians, and decrease of charity gave quite another physiognomy to the Christian body. On the other hand, the sources of our information for the later period flow so fully that we cannot mistake the essential outlines of faith, discipline, and organization, while there remain only fragmentary evidences for the heroic age of Christianity, over every one of which a jealous and interested criticism maintains the strictest watch. It is the intention of the writer to draw an outline of Christianity in those early ages, not precisely from the genetic point of view, but rather to present the religion of Christ as it must have seemed to an intelligent and impartial observer in the closing years of the

third century—such, perhaps, as it may have appeared to the son of Constantius Chlorus while he travelled in the body-guard of the Illyrian Cæsar through Egypt and Syria, or hastened in memorable flight across the heart of the empire from Byzantium to York. The moment is a propitious one, for both within and without the Church certain lines of evolution had then reached their last term. The subtle, poisonous influence of the Orient, conveyed through a hundred forms of Docetism and Gnosticism, had been dissipated by the united and intelligent efforts of the Christian episcopate and the writings of learned Christians. The episcopate itself, now a mighty network, frequently co-ordinate with the municipal system of the empire, was fully conscious of its own nature and mission. An immense sympathy, wide as the world and supremely intense, pulsated throughout the whole body from the humblest *episcopi gentium* on the borders of Scythia or Arabia to the successor of the Fisherman. Conflict and contradiction had drawn out all the latent energies of the Christian system, and as the mind wanders over the contents of the Christian literature of the period, the thinker is astonished at seeing that all the domestic and mixed questions which will eventually convulse Christendom,

and even yet disturb the peace of mankind, were in those dim days troubling the minds of our predecessors. Whoever will turn over the voluminous index of a book as remarkable as dangerous [1] may convince himself that within the first three centuries the Christian Church had been called on to face, at least in embryonic form, the most painful internal and external problems, and that she solved them with a firmness and accuracy that betray a rounded and plenary consciousness of her sublime mission and her supreme authority. Among the thousand scattered communities of Christians there was a strong sense of mutual fraternity, of solidary fellowship—the outcome of the common teachings and sufferings of ten generations. Never since then has there been so little jealousy, so little mutual distrust, so loving, frequent, and intimate communication, ignoring all the local and transitory interests of earthly

[1] Renan: *Les Origines du Christianisme* (8 vols. Paris, 1891). On the Christian side there is, as yet, no such brilliant and comprehensive synthesis of a multitude of excellent monographs. But the *Origines Chrétiennes* of the learned Abbé Duchesne; the works of Professor Probst of Breslau on doctrine, prayer, liturgy, the sacraments, and discipline in the first three centuries; the *Histoire des Persécutions* by Allard; the *Geschichte der roemischen Kirche* by Hagemann; the *Hippolytus und Callistus* of Doellinger, contain valuable antidotes to the Renanesque virus. Priceless material is stored up in the *Bulletino di Archeologia Cristiana* of De Rossi.

politics. Antioch and Alexandria recognized without demur the spiritual hegemony of Rome, and with maternal affection the latter sheltered in her bosom the multitudinous Christian visitors whom business or curiosity or piety led to the Golden Queen.[1]

On the other hand, the relations of the Roman state to Christianity, after much uncertainty and tergiversation, had at last reached a crucial point, when the opposing claims of Christ and Cæsar must be settled, either by peaceful means or by the dread and dangerous arbitrament of blood. Perhaps it was the clear sense of the finality of his act which made the politic son of Diocles hesitate so long on the eve of the combat, and exhaust every weaker makeshift before opening the last campaign of ethnicism against the sweet and humble law of Christ. It was surely this conviction

[1] Cf. Eusebius H. E., viii. 7. St. Athanasius: On the Opinion of Dionysius, c. 13. *De Synodis*, c. 43. Euseb. H. E., vii. 30; iv. 23; v 24. Fresh light has been thrown on the ecclesiastical supremacy of Rome by the discovery of the second-century epitaph of Abercius. See Lightfoot, The Apostolic Fathers, SS. Ignatius and Polycarp, vol. i., pp. 493-501, and the *Catholic Times* of Philadelphia, April 29, 1893, p. 4: "The Inscription of Abercius." Proofs of the Roman supremacy are gathered in the first volume of Harnack's *Dogmengeschichte*, and illustrated by Hagemann in *Die roemische Kirche* (Freiburg, 1864) and Schroedl, *Papstgeschichte* (Mainz, 1888). Cf. Rivington, The Primitive Church and the See of Peter (London, 1894).

which caused the warfare to be carried on against the Christians not as offending citizens of a common state, but as hostile belligerents.[1] The supreme hour had come for the death-struggle between Christian monotheism and the motley polytheism of the Gentile world, between the principles of individual spiritual liberty of conscience and absolute civic omnipotence, between the City of God and the City of Man. The Roman State of the first century looked upon the Christians with a supercilious contempt, scarcely distinguishing them from the vile herd that congregated in the Jewries of the Suburra and the Trastevere. As the evil grew, and the sensual, mongrel populations of the great cities began to suspect what Christianity meant, sedition and uproar so filled the empire that the governors were forced to intervene in the interests of public order, and usually, with a fine Roman arbitrariness, punished in the interest of peace the first visible cause, however innocent. But it was not alone the sensuous, soft life of the mob that Christianity threatened; the new religion was a constantly increasing peril for the old ethnic state based upon a vast and

[1] "The divine martyrs throughout the world . . . were dealt with no longer by common law, but attacked like enemies of war."—Eus. H. E., viii. 10.

intricate system of idolatry, on which it had grown to universal supremacy, and for which it felt that clinging sympathy which exists between institutions that have grown up on the same soil, under the same influences, and with the same scope. Between that state and Christianity there could be no alliance, and the lawyer's mind of Tertullian saw deeper into the true position than that of the scholarly apologist Melito.[1] So it came about in the third century that those in whom the true Roman consciousness was liveliest, and who clung with the most idolatrous passion to the invincible and eternal Majesty of the City, were firmly persuaded that the progress of the Christian idea meant the surrender of the old urban supremacy and the abdication of her secular glories before a mean and nameless multitude, obedient in every city to irresponsible heads, and actuated by ideals utterly strange, if not directly hostile to the ends of the Roman state. This ever-growing mass had in all large centres an *episcopus* and an *ecclesia*, and avoided the *capitolium* and the *fora*. It held, with a strange unanimity, doc-

[1] "Sed et Caesares credidissent Christo si, aut Caesares non essent necessarii saeculo, aut si et *Christiani potuissent esse Caesares*."—*Apologeticum*, c. 21. Compare the vague fear of Celsus that the Christians will ruin the state, *Origen adv. Celsum*, viii. 68, and Athenagoras, *Legatio*, ii. 3.

trines most unintelligible to the Roman statesmen. Its teachings concerning the poor, celibacy, woman, and slavery affected the existing framework of society at a hundred points. The profound ineradicable devotion to their chiefs, whether dead or alive, excited the sombre jealousy of the emperor, who claimed for the Roman Majesty, in him incorporate, all the devotion and sympathy of every citizen.

Frequent invasion, successful insurrection, blighting pests, and rapid internal decay added to the gravity of the situation, and we need not wonder that, in such a frame of mind, an otherwise good emperor like Decius, blind in his devotion to the tottering State, and urged on by the jealous philosophers and the interested temple priesthoods, undertook the eradication of the hated sect. But he came too late to the task. The *pusillus grex* had been shielded for over two centuries from a systematic onslaught that, humanly speaking, might have utterly scattered it at an earlier date, and Decius died, confessing that the cosmopolitan Christian association, with its centre beneath the shadow of the Palatine, was a graver danger to the empire than any change of dynasty.[1] Hence-

[1] Cum multo patientius et tolerabilius audiret levari adversus se æmulum principem quam constitui Romæ Dei sacerdotem. St. Cyprian, Ep. 55, 9 (ed. Hartel), p. 630.

forward, Christianity is, in a sense, on a political level with the Empire. In the long series of irregular successions and counter revolutions that fill the period subsequent to the brave death of Decius, the only united body in the Empire seems to be the Christians, and their influence is felt and accepted in opposing camps, in the stress of public misfortune, and even at the tribunal of Cæsar. Henceforth they fill the armies, and the highest officers of the Empire are entrusted to them. They are in the councils of the Illyrian emperors, and the conversion of Cæsar is no longer looked on as impossible or improbable. The females of the imperial court are won over to a religion of all others the most sympathetic and favorable to their sex. The very camps are redolent with an atmosphere of Christianity, and it is already in possession of the highest fruits of a perfect society among men—varied literature, native art and architecture, written legislation, representative assemblies, domestic annals, and an enlightened public opinion based on the ancient traditions and the historic evolution of the Christian world.[1]

It is at this period of transition, in the lull that

[1] De Broglie, *L'Eglise et l'Etat au IVième siècle*, 6 vols., Paris, 1860–66, vol. i., c. i. Mason, *The Persecution of Diocletian*, Cambridge, 1876. Burckhardt, *Die Zeit Constantins* (2d ed.), Leipzig, 1880. Gregg, *The Persecution of Decius*, London, 1897.

follows the events of A.D. 250–251, and before the outbreak of the final hurricane, that we desire to sketch the Christian society, its numbers, the causes of its rapid progress, its system of government, its bonds of unity, and its external life and action.

No domain of history has been scrutinized by more sharp eyes, or has been subjected to more diverse appreciations. No field of historical research counts to-day more patient, well-equipped scholars. For these reasons a summary retrospect of the true condition of Christianity at this time may interest the general reader and awaken in him fresh sympathy for those great men who upbore its banner in the darkest hour of conflict, confiding only on the justice of their cause and the right arm of the Almighty—we mean the Dionysii, the Cornelii, the Sixti, the Cyprians, the Lucii, the Eusebii, the Fabiani, and however else may have been called the leaders of that glorious militia which lifted the walls of Sion amid the smoking carnage of battle and the horrid din of infernal opposition.

## I.

### (*a*) In the West.

*The Number of the Christians.*—The rapid spread of Christianity in the West is evident from the

testimony of Tacitus, who speaks of a *multitudo ingens* as existing at Rome in the time of Nero.[1] It was thence that the faith was carried, at uncertain epochs of the first or second centuries, to Gaul, Africa, Spain, Britain, and the islands of the Mediterranean. The language of Tertullian, in his apologetic writings,[2] though somewhat rhetorical, must yet be substantially reliable, and his statement concerning the *Britannorum inaccessa Romanis loca Christo vero subdita*, is borne out by the well-known phrase of St. Irenæus about the barbarian nations who had the law written in their hearts without ink or paper.[3]

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[1] Igitur primo correpti qui fatebantur, deinde indicio eorum multitudo ingens, haud perinde crimine incendii quam odio humani generis convicti sunt, *Annales* xv., 44.

[2] Obsessam vociferantur civitatem: in agris, in castellis, in insulis Christianos; omnem sexum, ætatem, conditionem, etiam dignitatem transgredi ad hoc nomen quasi detrimento maerent. *Apologeticum*, c. 1. Hesterni sumus et vestra omnia implevimus, urbes, insulas, castella, municipia, castra ipsa, tribus, decurias, palatium, senatum, forum: sola vobis relinquimus templa, c. 37.

[3] Cui ordinationi assentiunt multæ gentes barbarorum, eorum qui in Christum credunt, sine charta et atramento scriptam habentes per spiritum in cordibus salutem, et *veterem traditionem* custodientes. *Adv. haer.*, iii., 4, 2. Taking these words together with the reference of Tertullian to British Christians, it seems to us that there is much more than modern critics allow in the story of the conversion of the British king (chieftain?) Lucius in the latter half of the

We have no means of calculating exactly the proportion of the Western Christians to the pagan population at the close of the third century. The number of bishops would afford some clew if it were known. The Acts of the pseudo-Synod of Sinuessa, compiled toward the end of the fifth century, relate that in the year 303 there were three hundred Italian bishops gathered near that city to condemn the Roman bishop Marcellinus for his supposed fall.[1] If these acts represented any local traditions, the above number would indicate a large Christian population in Italy at this time. We have yet the episcopal lists of the Councils of Arles (314) and Nice (325), but in faulty condition. While the number of bishops present at the latter is usually put down at 318, the ancient authorities variously estimate the number at Arles from 33, surely too small for a synod called by St. Augustine *plenarium universæ ecclesiæ concilium,* to 600, too great a number for the united churches of Italy, Gaul, and Africa, to furnish at that time. About the year 250, the Roman Church counted nearly one hun-

second century. See *Liber Pontificalis* (ed. Duchesne), vol. i., pp. cii. 59, 136, and the articles "Lucius" and "Eleutherius," in Smith's Dictionary of Christian Biography.

[1] Hefele, History of the Councils, i., 143. Mansi, *Coll. Amplissima Conc.*, i., 1250.

dred and fifty clerics, and supported from common funds fifteen hundred widows and orphans.[1] We learn from Eusebius, that at a Roman synod, in 251, there were present sixty bishops, and more priests and deacons, while a Carthagenian synod of the same year was visited by "very many bishops." St. Cyprian likewise informs us that several years earlier a Numidian synod held in the *Lambesitana Colonia* counted ninety bishops among its members.[2]

The Roman Synod of 313, in the affair of Donatus, counted among the judges fifteen Italian bishops, and three from Gaul, while Cæcilius and Donatus brought each ten African bishops with him.[3] We may imagine that these bishops did not represent any small or insignificant places, since as early as 343, the sixth canon of the council of Sardica forbade, as an abuse, the location of bishops in small sees, *ne vilescat nomen episcopi et auctoritas*. The *Liber Pontificalis* mentions forty-six episcopal ordinations at Rome, during six and a half years, in the very troublous and interrupted pontificates of Marcellus, Eusebius, and Miltiades.

[1] Eusebius, *Hist. Ecc.*, vi., 43. Letter of Cornelius of Rome to Fabius of Antioch.

[2] Euseb., *ibid.* Cyprian, ep. 59 (ed. Hartel).

[3] Optatus, *De Schismate Donatist*, lib. i.

The latter figures argue a very large Christian population at Rome before the persecutions of Diocletian began. Eusebius even tells us that Maxentius stopped the persecutions to please the people, and his famous words in the eighth book of his history on the extraordinary increase of the Christians must be taken to include the city of Rome, which had ever been the chief centre of Christian interests.[1]

A very large part of the Roman lower classes at this time may have been Christians, as they were able to fill the city with sedition and uproar because of internal dissensions and disputed papal elections.[2] The inscriptions of the catacombs justify the inference that many of the middle classes had accepted the teachings of Christ, though but few of the Roman aristocracy had openly professed the faith. At the beginning of the fourth century the Roman Church had twenty-five titles or quasi-parishes for the purposes of baptism and penance, and some twenty

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[1] H. E. viii., cc. 1, 14.

[2] In the famous case of the disputed election between Eusebius and Heraclius, the epitaph of St. Eusebius, recovered by De Rossi, tells us: "Hinc furor, hinc odium sequitur, discordia, lites, seditio, cædes, solvuntur foedera pacis," etc. See Northcote and Brownlow, *Roma Sotteranea*, I., p. 343.

cemeteries for the burial of the dead.[1] All this argues a large Christian element, and we cannot be far wrong in putting down the contemporary Christians of Rome at about one hundred thousand in a population variously estimated from eight hundred thousand to a million and a half.

There were certainly as many more in the rest of Italy. At this period Africa had about two hundred bishops,[2] and though the bishoprics of Spain were fewer, there was perhaps the same proportion of Christians in each province — about one hundred thousand, if we take the small scale of five hundred souls for each bishop of Africa. In Africa the rapid spread of the Donatist heresy proves the great number of Christians early in the fourth century. In 330 the Donatists had two hundred and seventy bishops at a synod, i.e., one for every Catholic diocese. The Spanish synod of Elvira (about 300) speaks as though Christians were to be found in every walk of life. There is in its utterances a consciousness of long-established authority. It speaks of the *copia puel-*

[1] *Liber Pontificalis* (ed. Duchesne), i., 164. "Hic (Marcellus) . . . XXV. titulos in urbe Roma constituit, quasi dioeceses, propter baptismum et poenitentiam multorum qui converte bantur ex paganis, et propter sepulturas martyrum."

[2] Münter, *Primordia Ecclesiæ Africanæ.* Hafniæ, 1829, p. 24.

*larum* among the Christians, and the danger of marrying outside the faith. The insistence on the frequentation of the Mass might indicate a great increase in numbers, and consequent lukewarmness on the part of the faithful.[1]

The number of Christians in Gaul cannot have been very great at this time, and they were perhaps confined chiefly to the valley of the Rhone, the southern seacoast, and the Roman stations on the Rhine. Sulpicius Severus, himself a Gallo-Roman, tells us that Christianity was slow in penetrating into Gaul: "*Religione Dei serius trans Alpes suscepta.*" The similar testimony of Gregory of Tours is borne out by the inscriptions and the study of the ancient episcopal lists of Gaul.[2] There were bishops of Treves and Cologne at Arles (314), as well as three bishops from Britain, but a half-century later the latter country had only three at the synod of Rimini (359). We hear of persecutions under Diocletian at St. Albans and Caerleon in Britain, but the scanty references to them do not justify us in supposing a considerable Christian population.

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[1] Hefele, I. 145. In the *Mélanges Renier* the Abbé Duchesne has shown that this important synod was held about the year 300.

[2] See Duchesne, *Mémoire sur l'origine des diocèses episcopaux en Gaule*, Paris, 1890.

The apostolic churches of Greece and Macedonia seem to have held their own during the third century. We do not hear of any notable increase, but this may be owing to the gradual disappearance of Greek influences from Roman public life, as well as to the stubborn resistance of Hellenism on its own natal soil. It was only in the ninth century that paganism was eventually extirpated in the remote parts of the Peloponnesus.[1] The churches of Corinth and Byzantium were flourishing at the end of the second century, and Christianity had already been well established in many of the islands, as in Crete and Melos.

### (*b*) In the Orient.

The diffusion of Christianity was naturally much greater in the Orient. It was long looked on as an Eastern cult, scarcely distinguishable from Judaism. Its professors were usually from the East, where its first communities were established, and where it acquired its distinctive name. In the West the barbarian lands were an almost impassable barrier, but the entire East was the seat of ancient culture and refinement—precisely the

[1] Constantine Porphyrogen. *De Adm. regni*, c. 50. For the details of the gradual extirpation of paganism after Constantine, see Schultze, *Der Untergang des Heidentums.* (Jena, 1892.)

field for a religion which appealed to all the higher and purer instincts of humanity. A letter of Pliny to Trajan early in the second century shows what astonishing progress the new religion had made in Bithynia and Pontus, and casts a strong light on the missions of Paul and Barnabas in Asia Minor.[1] Fifty years later, the magician Alexander of Abonoteichos found the same provinces full of atheists and Christians, and in the Easter controversy several bishops of this region took a notable part.[2] In the latter half of the third century Gregory Thaumaturgus is said to have almost entirely converted the pagan population in certain parts of Pontus, and his *Epistola Canonica*, one of the earliest and most venerable documents of diocesan legislation, supposes many well-established Christian communities. We learn from Philostorgius[3] that at this time the Goths captured many Christian ecclesiastics on the occasion of their inroads into Cappadocia and Galatia.

The cities of the western seaboard of Asia Minor, Ephesus, Smyrna, Tralles, Sardes, Rhodes, and others, contained a very large Christian population. Already in the middle of the third century

[1] Pliny, Epp., Lib. X., 93.

[2] Lucian, *Pseudomantis*, c. 25.

[3] Philostorgius, H. E., ii. 15. Routh, *Reliquiæ Sacræ*, iii. 256.

the city of Apamæa in Phrygia [1] seems thoroughly Christian, and used a Christian seal. The acts of St. Pionius of Smyrna (middle of third century) reveal a city largely Christian, in which prejudice had nearly died out. The apostolic activity of St. John, St. Paul, and of St. Timothy; the multitude of Jews who dwelt in these towns; the peculiar susceptibility to Christian influence of the numerous Greek artists who inhabited this region, contributed greatly to the increase of the Christians.

In the first three centuries we learn the names of only about thirty episcopal sees in this quarter; but that they were much more numerous is evident from the fact that about one hundred bishops of Asia Minor took part at the Council of Nice

[1] "Thenceforward (from A.D. 112) for three hundred years Phrygia was essentially a Christian land. There began the public profession of Christianity; there are found, from the third century, on monuments exposed to the public gaze, the terms *Chrestianos* or *Christianos;* there the formulas of epitaphs convey veiled references to Christian dogmas; there, from the days of Septimius Severus, great cities adopt biblical symbols for their coins, or rather adapt their old traditions to biblical narrations. A great number of the Christians of Ephesus and Rome came from Phrygia. The names most frequently met with on the monuments of Phrygia are the antique Christian names (Trophimus, Tychicus, Tryphenus, Papias, etc.), the names special to the apostolic times and of which the martyrologies are full."—Renan, *Origines du Christianisme*, iii. 363, 364.

(325). It would scarcely be an exaggeration to say that one-tenth of the twenty millions of Asia Minor were Christians at the beginning of the persecution of Diocletian.

The Christian population of Syria must have been proportionately as large as that of Asia Minor. It was the first land into which the Jewish proselytes penetrated; its cities, notably Damascus and Antioch, were filled with Jews. Here, too, a very large share of the early Christian literature arose. The early Syriac translation of the sacred books of the Christians (the Peschitta), the compilation of such episcopal manuals as the Apostolic Constitutions, and such romances as the Recognitions of Clement, the tireless activity of Pamphilus and his school of transcribers in copying the Scriptures—prove that there were many communities of wealthy and intelligent Christians. From the end of the first century Antioch was recognized by them as the head of all the churches of Syria, a position, to which her size, situation and history fully entitled her. Syria was the highway of Christian missionaries going east or west or north, and the number of its seaports made it an excellent field for proselytism; on the other hand, the coarse and sensuous character of its idolatry furnished the Christians the most tangible of arguments in

favor of monotheism. The discoveries of M. De Vogüé in Northern and Central Syria have put it beyond a doubt that at the beginning of the fourth century there was a very large percentage of Christians of rank and wealth in the splendid capital of the Orient.[1] The small kingdoms of Osrhoene, Adiabene, and Edessa were in great measure Christian at the end of the second century. In fact the first national conversion to Christianity that we know was that of the Abgars of Edessa, a line of kings whose Jewish sympathies go back more than a century earlier.[2]

The entire population of Palestine was much reduced in the early imperial period, and perhaps it did not amount to more than six hundred and fifty thousand. Among them there existed yet, and for many years after, the small church of the Nazarene Christians.[3] But the vast majority belonged to the Universal Church. The Jews preserved for a long time a peculiar autonomy, especially on their native soil. The rabbinical

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[1] De Vogüé, *La Syrie Centrale, Architecture civile et religieuse, du I. au VII. siècle.* Paris, 1865.

[2] *Chronicon Edessenum* in the *Bibliotheca Orientalis* of Assemani. For the many interesting questions connected with the origin of Christianity in these regions, see Tixeront, *Les Origines de l'Eglise d'Edesse,* Paris, 1888.

[3] St. Jerome, Ep. 74 (89) ad Augustinum.

schools nurtured the vague hope of a glorious temporal Messiah, and their patriarchs were clothed with a mixed temporal and spiritual power, which was so great in the time of Origen that the Jews pointed to it to show that the sceptre had not yet passed from Judah.[1] Still from the beginning of the third century we notice that there is a kind of renaissance in Christian proselytism. The death of the bishop Narcissus removed a venerable but aged administrator. Alexander, a Greek, who had come on a pilgrimage to Jerusalem, succeeded him. He seems to have been a man of great literary activity, and the earliest public library of Christendom was his creation. There is reason to believe that from this time many pilgrims came yearly to Jerusalem, which some ancient Christians looked on as the centre of the earth. Their number may have been one of the reasons why the city arose about this time, even before the victory of Constantine, to a greater influence than it had enjoyed as a colony of Hadrian.[2]

The frequent and bloody persecutions of the Alexandrine Christians are clear evidence that they were numerous. The cosmopolitan char-

[1] See Schürer, *History of the Jewish People in the Time of Jesus Christ*, vol. i., part ii. p. 276.

[2] Euseb., Hist. Ecc., vi., 8, 20; vi., 14, 19, 32.

acter of the city, the Paris of antiquity, with its multitudinous traders and travellers from Britain to India, furthered the Christian proselytism in a city of philosophers, students, and inquirers. We find here, from the latter half of the second century, a kind of Christian university, the famous catechetical school, which drew many pagans to its lectures. The history of the Arian heresy in its incipient stage shows a very large body of Christians at Alexandria early in the fourth century, where, at the same time, we hear of parishes (as at Rome), of hundreds of consecrated virgins, and similar indications of a flourishing community. The Egypto-Meletian schism is proof that the Coptic church was widespread throughout the Delta and along the Nile, and the same conviction results from the reading of the acts of the Coptic martyrs.

Early in the fourth century Alexander of Alexandria was able to gather a hundred bishops in the preliminary synod that condemned the teachings of Arius. Altogether it has been calculated that Egypt contained, in the time of Diocletian, about the same percentage of Christians as Asia Minor, i.e., about one million, or the eighth part of the population. In this may rightly be included the long strip of Libyan territory and the Pentap-

olis. Ancient Christian catacombs have been discovered in the territory of Cyrenaica, which betray the presence of numerous Christians.[1]

Beyond the limits of the empire, Armenia, the first of the great kingdoms to accept Christianity as the religion of the state, was thoroughly Christian before the victory of Saxa Rubra (A.D. 312). The work of Gregory the Illuminator was then going on over the whole plateau of this vast borderland, where Roman and Parthian, Byzantine and Persian, fought so long and so fiercely for absolute dominion. Its sparse population of three millions lived in somewhat feudal relations with the great nobles and the king. The aristocracy must have become Christian at the same time, since we learn from Eusebius that Maximinus Daza made war against Armenia (312) for having embraced Christianity, and an ancient tradition says that Gregory ordained four hundred bishops before his death.[2]

[1] Eusebius (H. E., viii. 8) speaks of "multitudes of Christian martyrs" in Egypt during the last persecution. One group condemned to the copper-mines of Palestine included seventy, and another one hundred and thirty men. The language and conduct of Dionysius of Alexandria, in the previous generation, show a very large Christian population, not only at Alexandria, but throughout the Delta of the Nile. On the catacombs of Egypt and Cyrenaica, see Kraus, *Real-Encyclopädie*, ii. 136.

[2] Agathangelos and Moses of Khorene (Langlois, *Historiens*

Persia is the country to which the apocryphal but very ancient Acts of the Apostles Simon and Jude, Thomas and Matthew, point as "the dark and bloody ground" of their apostolate. The Jews were there in larger numbers than elsewhere in the world outside of Judæa.[1] The border-lands of Mesopotamia and the small Syro-Greek kingdoms were filled with Christian communities, and Greek and Roman influences prevailed largely at the court of the last kings of the Parthian dynasty.[2] The great persecution begun by the new national dynasty of the Persians under Schapur (Sapor) II. reveals a sense of fear on the part of the Magians, and the number of the martyrs, variously calculated from sixteen to one hundred and ninety thousand, shows how the Christian faith had already honeycombed the Zoroastrian cult. John, a bishop of the Persian Church, assisted at the Council of Nice, and some years later

*de l'Arménie*, Paris, 1867). See also *Acta SS. Sept.* viii. 295–413, and Le Quien, *Oriens Christianus*, vol. i. Eusebius (H. E., ix. 8) speaks of the whole Armenian people as being "Christians, and zealous in their piety toward the Deity."

[1] The statistics of the Jewish Diaspora in the early imperial period are collected in the above-cited work of Schürer. On the apostolic missions in Persia, see Lipsius, *Die Apokryphen Apostelgeschichten*, 4 vols.

[2] The origins of these national churches in the border-lands of Rome and Persia are ably discussed in the above-cited work of Tixeront, and the polemic reply of the Abbé Martin.

the Persian Christians were numerous enough to induce Constantine to intercede for them with Schapur.[1]

In antiquity the limits of the territory known as Arabia were only vaguely known, and the success of the Roman arms was never complete enough to warrant the establishment of colonies. The nomadic manners of the Arabs or Saracens, and the fanatic Jewries on the border, were great obstacles to the spread of the Christian religion, yet we find about the middle of the third century "very many bishops" assembled at Bostra, a fortified Roman camp on the plateau of the Hauran, to try the case of the bishop Beryllus in presence of Origen. A Roman general, stationed in this neighborhood, sought the instruction of that great Christian teacher, as did Julia Mammæa, the mother of Alexander Severus. Finally, a contemporary Roman emperor, Philip the Arab, came from the vicinity of Bostra, and we know by the testimony of Eusebius that he was commonly reputed a Christian. The doctrines of Judaism had long since made some progress among the tribes of the desert, as we learn from Sozomen, and they were the usual leverage for Christian

[1] See Hefele, *History of the Councils*, vol. i., and Tillemont, *Mém. p. servir á l'hist. ecclésiastique*, vii. 76.

proselytism. That the monks and ascetics who fled to these remote regions made deep impressions on the children of the desert is evidenced by the strange story of Queen Mavia and the solitary Moses.

Isolated Christian captives there were among the Saracens, as among the Goths, in the middle of the third century. Eusebius relates the tender charity and concern of the Roman See in regard to these unfortunates.[1] It is very probable that there were communities of Christians in the Malabar peninsula before the time of Constantine, and the history and teachings of Manes reveal the presence of Christianity on the outermost limits of Persia.[2]

Trade and war, travel and lettered curiosity, must have scattered a sporadic knowledge of its tenets in every part of the world which was in any way known to the peoples of Græco-Roman

[1] Euseb., H. E., vi. 33, 21, 34. Sozomen, Hist. Ecc., vi. 38. "Why need I speak of the multitude that wandered in the deserts and mountains (of Arabia), and perished by hunger, and thirst, and cold, and sickness, and robbers, and wild beasts?" Dionysius of Alexandria, in Euseb., H. E., vi. 42. The Roman Church redeemed many of these unfortunates from the captivity of the Saracens, Euseb., vii. 5.

[2] See "The Christians of St. Thomas" in *The Catholic Times* of Philadelphia, April 15, 1893, and the articles on Manes and Manichaeans, in Smith's *Dictionary of Christian Biography.*

culture. It is literally true that *in omnem terram exivit sonus eorum.* The pages of Eusebius are full of the conviction that Christianity had already become numerically a huge power on the earth, with which henceforth all rulers must count. He quotes for us the Edict of Maximinus Daza in which he admits that "nearly all men" had deserted the service of the gods (H. E., ix. 9). He tells us of the incredible increase of Christianity in the days immediately preceding the persecution of Diocletian. He paints the public rejoicings in every city at the release of the martyrs, and the great activity in church-building and works of benevolence consequent on the cessation of the persecution.[1] It is impossible to read these pages and not feel that what the genius of Melito of Sardes and Origen had foreseen was now come to pass:[2] the empire had become Christian in this

[1] 'How can any one describe those vast assemblies, and the multitude that crowded together in every city, and the famous gatherings in the house of prayer, on whose account, not being satisfied with the ancient buildings, they erected from the foundations large churches in all the cities."—Euseb., H. E., viii. 1.

[2] Melito boldly parallels the rapid spread of Christianity with the contemporary growth of the Roman name and power, and insinuates that they are related as cause and effect, Euseb., H. E., iv. 26; Otto, *Corpus Apologetarum*, ix. p. 412. The number and influence of the Christians in the Orient might easily justify the vague conviction of Origen

sense, that the religion of Christ now stood out the only compact, united, vigorous, and aggressive religious power in the empire. It had not yet the majority. The religious philosophies and the ethnic cults lasted on, but without hope, or cohesion, or balance, or distinct aim. The battle was won, and the division of the spoils might be left till the morrow.[1]

From the above or similar data Gibbon reckons the Christian population of the empire before the conversion of Constantine at about five millions or one-twentieth of the population; Keim, Zockler, and Chastel, at about sixteen millions; while Schultze puts ten millions as the minimum figure in a population of about one hundred millions.[2] The Christians were surely more numerous than

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that the religion of Christians would one day be mistress of the empire, "since it was daily winning a multitude of souls," *Adv. Celsum*, viii. 68 (Migne, P. G., xi. 1620). On the character and opinions of this very remarkable bishop of the second century, see *Melito von Sardes*, by C. Thomas (Osnabrück), 1893.

[1] The details of the gradual extirpation of paganism are given in the learned and rare work of Beugnot, *Histoire de la déstruction du Paganisme en Occident*, Paris, 1835, and Chastel, *Histoire de la déstruction du Paganisme dans l'Empire d'Orient*, Paris, 1850. The works of M. Boisser, *La Fin du Paganisme*, Paris, 1891, and O. Seeck, *Der Untergang der griechisch-roemischen antiken Welt*, Berlin, 1901, are written from different viewpoints, but are both valuable.

[2] Schultze, op. cit., i., p. 22.

the Jews, who numbered some four millions within the empire at this period; hence the figures of Gibbon must be looked on as too low, especially as the Orient alone would easily furnish, from modern calculations, a greater number.

(*c*) Constituents of the Christian Society.

The Christian society of the third century was made up of many elements. No doubt the poor and the humble were in a great majority. But it would be as much of an error to think that slaves were very numerous in it as to imagine that any large portion of the Roman aristocracy had accepted the teachings of Christ. The legal position of the former made it difficult and dangerous to practise a religion which their masters did not approve, and the public duties and ambitions of the latter found in Christianity a most embarrassing obstacle. In the higher classes, especially, the neglect of the Roman religion was less easily tolerated than in the motley multitude.

The bulk of the Christian population seems usually to have been made up of the middle classes —the free poor, the small tradesman or patron, artisans, workers in metal and marble, Greek and Oriental foreigners,[1] etc.

[1] See Allard, *Les Esclaves Chrétiens*, Paris, 1876. It is the

There was a great deal of travel in the early imperial epoch,[1] and every large church counted on its feast-days men of many nationalities within its walls. At Alexandria and Antioch, at Nicomedia and Trier the great offices of state were frequently filled by Christians. They had a splendid church at Nicomedia, built upon an elevation, and the Old Basilica at Antioch was not without a certain magnificence. St. Optatus of Milevi informs us

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impression which the Acts of the Martyrs, i.e., those of St. Justin, and the complexion of the Roman Church before Constantine make upon us. The Acts of St. Pionius of Smyrna show a large and free Christian population in that city about A.D. 250. And the wealth of the Roman Church came neither from slaves nor entirely from her noble members. On the percentage of the nobility in the primitive Church, see the Bulletins of De Rossi, *s.v.* Nobilitas, the work of Dom Guéranger, *Sainte Cécile et la Société Romaine aux deux premiers siècles* (3d ed ), Paris, 1890, and Lanciani, *Pagan and Christian Rome.* The kings of Edessa were Christian from the end of the second century at least. Those of Armenia were converted a century later, and in the meantime the little Greek state of the Bosphorus (Crimea) had become largely Christian. It was commonly believed that the Emperor Philip the Arab and his family were Christian, and such, too, seem to have been Julia Mammaea, the distinguished mother of Alexander Severus, and Salonina, the wife of Gallienus. The wife and daughter of Diocletian were Christians before the outbreak of the persecution. When "Cæsar's household" did not escape, we need not wonder that many Cæcilii, Valerii, Anicii, Glabriones, Annii, Probi, Bassi, Græcini, and like families were won over to Christianity.

[1] See *Weltverkehr und Kirche in den drei ersten Jahrhunderten,* by Th. Zahn (Hanover, 1877).

that early in the fourth century they had over forty churches at Rome, and Eusebius tells us that before the last persecution there was a very great activity in church-building throughout the empire. The churches began already to possess the cemeteries in their own right, and they formed corporations capable of holding property from the time of Gallienus. The little "house-churches" had long since given way to a peculiarly Christian style, for the basilica form was not first adopted by the Christians after the downfall of paganism —it is considerably older, and some maintain that it is the product of Christian architectural progress in the third century, the outcome of a combination of "house-church," catacomb-chapel, and private domestic hall.[1] Yet, while it is clear that Christianity was very widespread in the last quarter of the third century, we must make due reservations; it was met with chiefly in the cities, much less in the open country; its votaries were far more numerous in the East than in the West; their public status was in a transition crisis from the primitive period when the powerful and contemptuous state scarcely distinguished them from the mob of Jews to the hour when the terrified

[1] See the article on Basilicas in the *Encyclopädie* of Kraus.

administration recognized that the whole world was honeycombed with the new doctrines and the hour of final conflict was at hand. The latter point is very clear from the history of Paul of Samosata, and the opening reflections of Eusebius in the eighth book of his Church History, as well as from the epitaph of Pope Eusebius and certain remarks of St. Cyprian in the golden booklet *De Lapsis*.

## II.

### Causes of the Rapid Spread of Christianity.[1]

(*a*) *Proselytism.*—The words of Christ (Luke iv. 18, 19; ix. 2) could leave no doubt in the minds of the apostles as to the chief means by which they were to found the kingdom of God in the hearts of men. It was by oral preaching, by personal appeal and instruction. They understood from the beginning that they were above all "ministers and captains" of the Word (Acts v. 12). The earliest Christian writers present the εὐαγγέλιον, the κήρυγμα, the public official proclamation of the history and the teachings of Jesus

[1] The writer takes for granted the co-operation of supernatural agencies, and the impossibility of explaining by natural causes alone the long and successful resistance, and the ultimate survival, of Christianity.

Christ as the ordinary means of propagating faith in Him. The earliest bits of Christian biography, the apocryphal Acts of the Apostles, are usually styled preachings or circuits, and in the Christian literature of the first three centuries the inculcation of Christianity is called a teaching, a bearing of witness.[1] In the days of the first vivid enthusiasm the Christians saw many quasi-inspired men, called prophets, who wandered up and down the world, filled with a holy zeal, discoursing with more than human eloquence, often rapt beyond themselves, omnipresent, tireless, aggressive, well fitted to introduce the leaven of truth into a timorous or hesitating community, and to confirm in the accepted faith the dubious and wavering. The generation of these ardent souls did not pass away with the apostolic times; they lived on into the second century. There are echoes of their missions in Papias, Polycarp, Ignatius, and Hermas. "The Teaching of the Twelve Apostles" shows them yet active in the service of the Catholic Church,[2] and a valuable passage of Eusebius leads us to believe that they were still numerous in the middle

[1] Mark xvi. 15; II. Tim. iv. 17; Titus i. 3. The apocryphal Acts of the Apostles are collected and examined in the great work of Lipsius, *Die Apokryphen Apostelgeschichten.*

[2] See Funk, *Opera Patrum Apostolicorum* (2 vols., 8vo. Tübingen, 1902).

of the second Christian century.[1] The apostles left, indeed, a regularly constituted hierarchy,[2] but in the pioneer days of Christianity every convert was a preacher, devoured with the desire of compelling all men to enter the kingdom of God ere the fatal hour of the Second Coming of the Son of man.[3] The duty of preaching rested chiefly upon the bishops,[4] and the pages of Eusebius show

[1] "For, indeed, most of the disciples of that time, animated by the divine word with a more ardent love for philosophy (i.e., the perfect Christian life), had already fulfilled the commands of the Saviour and had distributed their goods to the needy. Then starting out upon long journeys, they performed the office of evangelists, being filled with the desire to preach Christ to those that had not yet heard the word of faith, and to deliver to them the divine gospels. And when they had only laid the foundations of the faith in foreign places, they appointed others as pastors, and entrusted them with the nurture of those that had recently been brought in, while they themselves went on again to other countries and nations with the grace and co-operation of God. For a great many wonderful works were done by them through the power of the divine Spirit, so that at the first hearing whole multitudes of men eagerly embraced the religion of the Creator of the universe."—Euseb., H. E. vii. 38.

[2] Epistle of St. Clement of Rome to the Corinthians, c. 42, and the Epistles of St. Ignatius of Antioch. Cf. Lightfoot, *The Apostolic Fathers* (London, 1890).

[3] This is well expressed by St. Hilary of Poitiers: "Ut cresceret plebs et multiplicaretur, omnibus inter initia concessum et evangelizare et baptizare . . . at ubi omnia loca circumplexa est ecclesia, conventicula constituta sunt, et rectores, et caetera officia in ecclesia sunt ordinata."—*Comm. in Ephes.*, 4.

[4] *Recognitions of Clement*, iii. 67. *Apostolic Constitutions*, ii. 26.

us that in the second and third centuries they were men of great eloquence and address, and extremely active in disseminating the Christian teachings. The Catholic Church counts to-day among her brightest glories such pioneer preachers and administrators of the divine *mandatum* as Clement of Rome, Ignatius of Antioch, Melito of Sardes, Abircius Marcellus, Dionysius of Corinth and his namesake of Alexandria, Alexander of Jerusalem, Theophilus of Antioch, Apollinarius of Hierapolis, the Roman bishops Victor, Cornelius, Dionysius, and a host of others whose names and missionary work Eusebius either ignored or did not see fit to hand down. We see in St. Justin a second-century type of the Christian proselytizer, clothed in the coarse cloak of the philosopher, holding open school in the upper rooms of a friend's house, disputing with Cynics and Jews in the streets of Rome or the porticoes of Ephesus—bland, insinuating, supple in argument, broken to all the dialectic exercise of the time, conciliating and adapting, explaining with fullest freedom the most holy *arcana* of the society, at once Jew, Greek, and Roman, that he might gain all to Christ.[1] Not

[1] Acts of the Martyrdom of St. Justin and his companions. Ruinart, *Acta Martyrum Sincera* (ed. Ratisbon, 1859), p. 105. See his Apology and Dialogue with Trypho in Otto, *Corpus Apologetarum* (vols. i., ii.).

only the bishops, but the priests and deacons, had a special mission to teach and instruct, to guide the catechumens, to console the confessors and prepare them for martyrdom, to collect their last words, describe the scenes of their holy deaths, and form in the faith of Christ the new converts that every execution led into the Church.[1]

Perhaps there is in all ecclesiastical history no more striking example of proselyting zeal than the great Origen. From his youth he burned to spread the law of Christ, and took up the public catechetical schools of Alexandria when they stood in grave peril of suppression or decay. He formed in this earliest of Christian seminaries the greatest Christians of the age; he attracted multitudes of pagans; by word and example he stirred up the sluggish depths of men's natures, and revealed to the astonished gaze of Christians and pagans the endless adaptability of the new religion to the most manifold relations of society, literature, civil government, and human progress. He travelled many a weary mile across the sands of Arabia to convert a Roman general, and crossed the sea to expound Christianity to Julia Mam-

[1] "Cruciate, torquete, damnate, atterite nos. . . . Pluries efficimur quoties metimur a vobis. Semen est sanguis martyrum."—Tertullian, *Apologeticum*, c. 5.

mæa, the empress mother of the most noble and sympathetic of the pagan line of emperors. His predecessor, Pantænus, had gone on a similar mission to India; in fact, the school of Alexandria was a centre of the most intelligent proselytism up to the time of Constantine. We could not ask for any better proof of it than the famous letter of Bishop Theonas of Alexandria to Lucian, the Christian provost of the imperial chamberlains of Diocletian.[1]

But it was not only the Church authorities who carried on the proselytism for Christ. All the faithful were soldiers of the Lord, and their life was looked on as a *militia*—an existence of defensive and offensive warfare.[2] The most frequent

[1] See Routh, *Reliquiae Sacrae*, iii. 439. It contains the proof that a great many of the chief officers of Diocletian's household were Christians, but its chief interest lies in the directions given for gradually turning the attention of the emperor to the Christian faith. "Ille tamen praecipuus inter vos erit et diligentissimus cui libros servandos princeps mandaverit . . . si igitur ex credentibus in Christum ad hoc ipsum officium advocari contingat, non spernat et ipse litteras seculares et gentilium ingenia, quae principem oblectant. Laudandi oratores . . . laudandi historici . . . interdum et divinas scripturas laudari conabitur, . . . laudabitur et interim evangelium, apostolusque (i.e., St. Paul), pro divinis oraculis: insurgere poterit Christi mentio, explicabitur paulatim ejus sola divinitas; omnia haec cum Christi adjutorio provenire possent."

[2] *Jesu Christo regi eterno milito*, says the martyr Marcellus to the judge. Ruinart, *Acta Sincera*, etc. Maturus is called

scene of these holy combats was the family. The influence of a converted mother or sister was enormous. The change in the female conduct, the suavity and devotion of their lives, the increasing tenderness and pity in their dealings with the slave, the poor, and the unfortunate, the moral elevation and refinement of their whole being could not escape the notice of the other members of the family circle. We may gather from the pages of Tacitus the impression that the conversion of a woman like Pomponia Græcina made on Roman society.[1] That of Priscilla, Lucina, Cæcilia, the Flaviæ Domitillæ and the Aciliæ Glabriones could scarcely do less.

Yet, not unfrequently, the most bitter opposition came precisely from the family of the convert; it was so in the time of Tertullian, and some-

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*generosissimus pugil Christi* in the Acts of the Martyrs of Vienne, *Militia Dei sumus*, Tert., *De Oratione*, c. 19. *Exhort. ad Martyres*, c. 3. Compare II. Tim. ii. 3; I. Cor. ix. 24; I. Tim. i. 18; II. Cor. x. 3.

[1] "Longa huic Pomponiae aetas, et continua tristitia fuit, . . . per quadraginta annos, non cultu nisi lugubri, non animo nisi moesto egit. Idque illi, imperitante Claudio impune, mox ad gloriam vertit." *Annales*, xiii. 32. Before this she had been traduced as *superstition is externae rea*, and acquitted by the domestic council. This superstition was Christianity, the *exitiabilis superstitio* of Tacitus (Ann. xiv. 44), the *superstitio nova et malefica* of Suetonius (Nero 16), and the *superstitio prava et immodica* of Pliny (Epp. x. 96).

what later Origen classes parents among the chief persecutors of the new religion.[1] The proselytism of the Christians is one of the chief objections that Celsus raises against the faith, and in his replies Origen manifests much pride in the persistent devotion to Christ of poor and humble people of all nations and classes. He points out that many Christians gave themselves up entirely to missionary work.[2] And when the pagan philosopher insists that they are only the refuse of the population, the apologist does not take any pains to deny it, other than to point out that the Christians are not without some wealthy and noble members, especially among the female sex.[3]

This domestic apostolate was greatly furthered by the Christian slaves. The Acts of the Martyrs

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[1] "Sed ad Christianos quod spectat, senatum Romanum, imperatores diversis temporibus, milites, populos, ipsos eorum qui crediderunt parentes, in eorum doctrinam conspirasse."—*Contra Celsum*, i. 3.

[2] "Inde liquet quod Christiani, quantum in se est, curent ut quo terrarum cunque sua doctrina spargatur quo fit ut quidam id sibi negotium desumpserint, ut non solum urbes, sed etiam vicos et villas obambularent, quo alios ad pium Dei cultum adducerent."—*Ibid.*, iii. 9.

[3] *Ibid.*, iii. 44, 55. "In privatis ædibus videre est lanifices, sutores, fullones, imperitissimum quemque et rusticissimum coram senioribus . . . nihil audere proloqui; ubi vero seorsum nacti fuerint pueros et mulierculas aeque ac ipsi imperitas, mira quædam disserunt," etc. Cf. *ibid.*, i. 27, vi. 14, and *Peri Archon*, iv. 1, 2.

contain numerous evidences of the religious activity of slaves, and the lives of St. Gregory Nazianzen, St. Monica, and St. Paulinus of Nola offer evidence of their devotion and authority. We know that at one period they exercised much influence in the household of Septimius Severus, that the wet-nurse of his son Caracalla was a Christian,[1] and that a certain Christian, Proculus, probably a freedman, cured the emperor by the application of oil.

"Would that we could know," says M. Allard, "the secret of those domestic missions which so vexed the pagan soul of Celsus! We would stand by the loom of the weaver and hear some uncultured tongue expound the divine truths; we would see young working girls gathered about some venerable toiler and listening to her encomia on the sweets of purity; we might even push aside the great doors of bronze and, lifting the heavy tapestries, see the child at the knee of a Christian nurse, the youth listening to his pedagogue, the

[1] Cruel as Caracalla was, there are several reasons for believing that he was favorable to the Christians: his early education, his aversion to sacrifices, his recalling of all those banished to the islands, his vexation at the punishment of his Christian playmate, the comparative peace of the faithful during his reign. (Cf. Caracalla in *Dictionary of Christian Biography.*)

master learning from the overseer of his property, the judge instructed by the martyr. What intimate confidings! What touching revelations! What sweetly burning tears! We would see then the pure and divine side of that awful institution of slavery, of which history has shown us only the cruel and infamous reverse. One day it is a noble, rich, illustrious family that enters the Church; again, a young girl suddenly declares her intention of leading a life of virginity; on another occasion love and peace descend with the faith into a household where hitherto reigned a horrid rivalry in vice; elsewhere a magistrate lays aside the trappings of office to live an humble and charitable life: all the while the world looks on and knows not the secret springs of such strange resolutions, but somewhere and always there is a poor slave who divides with the Lord a secret that causes his heart to overflow with heavenly gladness." [1]

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[1] Paul Allard, *Les Esclaves Chrétiens*, p. 300. An interesting verification of the above is furnished by the sarcophagus of Proxenes in the Villa Borghese at Rome. The original decoration and the epitaph are purely pagan, but one of his Christian freedmen, absent from Rome at the time of his death, has left us the secret of his conversion in the following mutilated words which he scratched on the tomb: PROSENES RECEPTUS AD DEUM . . . REGREDIENS IN URBE SCRIPSIT AMPELIUS LIBERTUS. De Rossi, *Inscriptiones Christianæ Urbis Romæ*, vol. i., n. 5 (an. 217), p. 9.

(*b*) *Corporate Union of Christians.*—In spite of the most active proselytism, the Christian religion would have made but slow progress if its members had not established some system of frequent assembly, enabling them to meet regularly for mutual edification and consolation. That they did so is amply proved by the Acts of the Martyrs, the repressive imperial legislation, the literary remains, and the venerable monuments of the pre-Constantinian period. But how was it possible for such numerous bodies of men to meet in the midst of great cities, when the very name of the Christians was outlawed? From the time of Nero, Christianity was an illicit religion. *Non licet esse vos* was the watchword of heathen society, and might have been written over the door of every meeting-place of the Christians. To the traditional Roman statesman the Christian appeared as one who violated fundamental laws of the state. He introduced a foreign superstition and a new cult without the permission of the senate or the emperor. He was guilty of high treason by refusing even the simplest act of worship to the genius of perenduring Rome. He manifested an obstinacy against the sacred state which was absolutely incomprehensible to the magistrates, when they only asked an outward compliance, and cared

little or nothing for his intimate convictions. He belonged to a forbidden society, and actions for sacrilege and the practice of criminal magic could, in the opinion of Roman lawyers, be brought against him. In a word, he lived in a time when all the civil and religious elements of society were inextricably interwoven, and a new, exclusive, proselytizing, universal religion could not help offending at every step a civil order which was at once the outgrowth and solid proof of idolatry.[1] It is true that there were long periods of peace for the Christians under emperors like Commodus and Caracalla, Alexander Severus and Gallienus, and in the forty years preceding the last persecution the laws were on the statute-books, but were not enforced. Fanaticism was wearied and silent. The emperors discouraged or forbade pursuit of Christians, who, on the other hand, were becoming so numerous that nothing short of wholesale extermination could uproot the evil.

[1] The legal position of Christianity in the early imperial period is the subject of an exhaustive study by the Christian epigraphist Le Blant: *Sur les bases juridiques des poursuites dirigées contre les Martyres*, in the proceedings of the Academy of Inscriptions and Belles Lettres, vol. ii. (Paris, 1868), pp. 358–373. See also the article *Christenverfolgungen* in Kraus' *Real-Encyclopädie*, i., p. 215. According to Lactantius (Div. Inst., v. ii.), the great jurist Ulpian went so far as to codify the numerous laws directed against the Christians in a work entitled *De officio proconsulis*.

Nevertheless there was a period especially during the second century when Christianity had not yet wearied its persecutors, and when the laws were regularly applied to work its eradication.[1] How did the vast network of Christian associations manage to exist during this latter period without being constantly broken up and forced to abandon the strong leverage which they had in their regular reunions on stated days and in fixed places? Much light has been thrown upon this question within the last half-century by the researches of archæologists and illustrators of the civil law. In the ancient world scarcely any institution was dearer to the masses of the people than the right of association. While the democratic or republican spirit endured in Greece and Rome this natural right was held sacred, and we have a multitude of epigraphic evidences to show that there existed a vast network of societies for every imaginable purpose—trade guilds, religious sodalities, confraternities, *collegia* for every grade and avocation among the bourgeois and the poor, while the Roman patriciate found in its traditions, its wealth, its business, and political franchises, the consolation and strength that the

[1] Cf. Renan, *Marc-Aurèle*, pp. 53, 302, and Allard, *Hist. des persécutions pendant les deux premiers siècles*, i. 329–388.

poor sought in their association or college.[1] It was a result of the Greek's aversion to quiet family life, that he threw himself with ardor into external associations. Long before the coming of Christ, men united at Athens, Rhodes, and on the islands for purposes of business or pleasure, to insure against loss by fire, and to honor some particular deity. The meetings were held in some retired garden, surrounded with porticoes, and provided with a central altar of sacrifice. Dignitaries, chosen by lot, and an elective president carried on the government of the little state, for such it was in many cases, the members being passionately attached to this second and artificial family. There was a common treasury, and mutual benevolence played a large share in the transactions of these curious forerunners of our modern social reunions. They were a kind of harmless freemasonry, in which were preserved some of the better traits of the old Hellenic life.[2] Whether the Romans adopted these associations from the

[1] Mommsen, *De Collegiis et Sodaliciis Romanorum*, Kiliae, 1843. Boissier, *La Religion Romaine aux temps des Antonins*, Paris, 1884, vol. ii., p. 238, *Les Classes inférieures et les Associations populaires.* Doulcet, *Rapports de l'Église et de l'État aux trois premiers siècles*, Paris, 1883, pp. 152–164; Boissier, *Promenades Archéologiques*, Paris, 1887 (*Rome et Pompeii*, p. 183).

[2] Fouquet, *Des Associations religieuses chez les Grecs.*

Greeks or formed them from natural inclination, they existed in great numbers in the period immediately before and after Christ. In the earlier times they had a religious character, but became eventually, in the last days of the Republic, the prey of political demagogues, and were thenceforward, under the dictators and the emperors of the first two Christian centuries, the object of much repressive legislation.[1] They were either com-

[1] Trajan was so severe on the *collegia* that he would not allow the citizens of a Bithynian city to unite in forming a fire brigade, Pliny, Epp. x. 93. It is worth noting, as an index of the profound democratic current in the Church, that in every century she has encouraged the formation and protected the rights of a multitude of particular societies, confraternities, institutes, associations, guilds, sodalities, etc. The more absolute the sway and influence of Christianity, the deeper the respect of individual rights and the larger the freedom of the citizen. On this score the much maligned Middle Ages, with their rich and beneficent pullulation of private associations, may challenge the golden days of the military despotism of the old and the new Cæsars, or the blighting and crushing bureaucracy of New Rome or modern Europe. See the eloquent admission of Renan, *Les Apôtres* (vol. ii. of *Les Origines du Christianisme*), p. 363:

"Nos grandes sociétés abstraites ne sont pas suffisantes pour repondre à tous les instincts de sociabilité qui sont dans l'homme. Laissez le mettre son cœur à quelque chose, chercher la consolation où il la trouve, se créer des frères, contracter des liens de cœur. Que la main froide de l'état n'intervienne pas dans ce royaume de la liberté. La vie, la joie ne renaitront dans le monde que quand notre défiance contre les *collegia*, ce triste héritage du droit romain, aura disparu."

pletely forbidden, or allowed only with the greatest difficulty.

Whereas originally every trade and industry, every god indigenous or foreign, every nation or city or great family had its special body of associates bearing its name and serving its interests, the military rulers of the city allow henceforth only the very poorest and the most wretched to unite, and then only for purposes of mutual burial.[1] The men of antiquity held very dear a proper burial among their own, and scarcely anything is more touching than the pains which they took to secure it. The Cæsars, therefore, could not take from the poor man or the slave their only chance possible of obtaining decent sepulture, with the post-mortem honors of flowers, libations, and anniversary banquets. They were permitted to combine for this purpose, and this is the origin of the famous *collegia tenuiorum* or the *collegia funeraticia*, which suggested to the outlawed members of the Christian religion a legal issue from their proscribed condition, or at least the securing of a legal right to meet publicly, under cover of attending to the business of a mutual burial association.

[1] See some remnants of the ancient legislation in the *Corpus juris civilis*, xlvii. 22. *De collegiis et corporibus.*

Such colleges had a constitution, or *lex collegii*, a regular election of officers, a treasury, or *arca communis*, a *schola*, or place of meeting. They collected from each new member a fixed sum on entering, and at the death of a member a small tax was levied on the survivors. On the other hand, they looked about for rich friends and patrons, from whose gifts and legacies they might pay a fixed sum to all who attended the funeral, and offer to the *sociétaires* frequent anniversary feasts. They were supposed to meet monthly. They buried their dead, sometimes in *columbaria*, or square chambers filled up on all four sides with small niches for the urns containing the ashes, sometimes in their own small cemeteries. Where the body was lost or irrecoverable, they gave an imaginary funeral (*funus imaginarium*). These humble associations furnished the needed framework for the public life of the Christians, who could not be ignorant of them, as thousands of their proselytes came from just such societies. The Christians desired very much to bury their dead apart, when possible, not only from the corporate affection they bore to one another, but because they did not burn the remains of their dead as did most pagans. Moreover, the gatherings of these societies were often large; they in-

cluded both sexes, and men of all classes; there were many of them in the city, and in time the laws were so softened as to permit their meeting for religious purposes as often as they wished. Later on there sprang up beside them tolerated societies of *cultores deorum*, or votaries of some particular god or goddess, and in the third century, during the relaxation of persecution, the latter societies became quite numerous. *A priori*, therefore, it is not improbable that the Christians could associate in this manner, the only legal outlet left to them, as far as we know.[1] That they

[1] M. Gaston Boissier sums up satisfactorily the points of contact between the pagan and the Christian burial clubs: "Les ressemblances sont en effet très nombreuses entre les associations des deux cultes. Les Chrétiens possèdent aussi une caisse commune, alimentée par les contributions des fidèles; chez eux aussi les contributions se payent tous les mois; ils n'ont pas moins de souci de la sépulture de leurs morts, et l'Église a de depenser une grande partie de ses revenue à construire ses immenses cimetières. Des deux côtés le respect de la hiérarchie sociale se mêle à un grand esprit d'égalité; les morts de toute condition sont confondus dans les *columbaria* comme dans les catacombes. C'est le suffrage de tous qui nomme les chefs, et il va quelquefois chercher le plus humble pour le mettre à la première place. Au moment où de pauvres affranchis arrivent aux dignités les plus élevées des collèges, un ancien esclave, le banquier Calliste, s'asseoit sur la chaise de Pierre que devait occuper un Cornélius. Enfin, les repas communs ont autant d'importance dans les réunions des Chrétiens que dans les associations paiennes; l'Église célèbre dans toutes ses fêtes le festin fraternel des agapes, et, pour honorer des martyrs, les fidèles dînent

actually did is insinuated by a text of Textullian in the thirty-ninth chapter of his Apology. He is speaking precisely of licit and illicit associations, and is trying to prove that the Christians belong to the first category. "Our treasure," says he, "when we have one, is not made up of the large contributions of ambitious persons who seek honor; it is not by putting up our religion at auction that we increase our wealth. Each one brings monthly a modest contribution. He pays if he wishes to, and as he wishes, or, rather, as he can; no one is compelled to give. The contributions are voluntary. We look upon that money as a pious fund which we do not spend in eating or drinking nor in indecent orgies. It helps to feed the poor and to bury them, to rear the orphans of both sexes, and to support the aged." When we compare these apposite words of Tertullian with one of the *textus classici* on the burial societies, we cannot help feeling that he is referring to a similar organization of the Christian body.[1] It is true that the Christians were not

sur leurs tombeaux à l'anniversaire de leur mort."—*La Religion Romaine*, ii., p. 300.

[1] "Mandatis principalibus præcipitur præsidibus provinciarum ne patiantur esse collegia sodalicia, neve milites in castris collegia habeant. Sed permittitur tenuioribus stipem menstruam conferre dum tamen semel in mense coeant, ne sub

afraid to proclaim their numbers openly. Tertullian himself, in a famous passage already cited (*Apol.*, c. 37), vaunts their multitude, and the imperial police could not be ignorant of the frequent councils held in the latter quarter of the second century. But at the beginning of the third century the Church became the possessor of landed estates in the shape of cemeteries, once the property of individuals, but which a series of circumstances threw into her hands. Her increasing wealth demanded some secure title by which it might be protected from the unfaithful steward [1] as well as from the pagan informer or the apostate. This title was at hand in the character of a burial association, which form of reunion became extremely popular at this very juncture, and was extended by imperial rescript from Rome to the provinces. Such a privilege was of the highest importance for the propagation of Christianity. It gave the religion, in times of peace, a working legality, to say the least. It permitted public meetings, the excavation of catacombs, election

prætextus hujusmodi illicitum collegium coeat, quod non tantum in urbe sed et in Italia et in provinciis locum habere divus quoque Severus rescripsit."—*Digest*, XXXXVII. 22, 1.

[1] "Nicostratum multorum criminum reum . . . *Ecclesiæ deposita non modica* abstulisse . . . Spoliati ab illo pupilli, fraudatæ viduæ, *pecuniæ quoque ecclesiæ* denegatæ."—St. Cyprian, *Epp.* 50–32 (ed. Hartel).

of officers, mutual consultation, enrolment of nobles, women, foreigners, slaves, etc. Her wealthy members might easily assume the *rôle* of patrons that others of the same class played in the pagan corporations.

The regular distributions of the Church to the clergy, the widows, the poor, and the strangers could easily be carried on at these semi-legal meetings, for the pagans were wont to give out special rations and even money on such occasions. It is worth noticing that the *Liber Pontificalis* attributes to this period and to Callixtus, the deacon of Zephyrin, the establishment or renovation of THE CEMETERY *par excellence,* to which his name was afterwards attached.[1] And the mentions of ecclesiastical property at Rome and elsewhere become henceforth more numerous, yet so that the *areae* and *cemeteria* form the nucleus of the growing estates of the infant churches. Thus, when Gallienus restores the confiscated property of the Christians, the cemeteries figure at the head of the list, and when Maxentius does the same, forty years later, the burial-places are still the solid block of ecclesiastical wealth. De Rossi conjectures that the bishop was always inscribed as syndic or agent of these associations, in accord-

[1] *Liber Pontificalis* (ed. Duchesne), i. 141.

ance with a prescription of the civil law, and he elucidates with much skill, by the aid of this supposition, the very tangled chronology of the Roman episcopal succession in the first decade of the fourth century.[1]

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[1] The arguments of De Rossi are neatly summed up by Northcote and Brownlow in their *Roma Sotterranea*, i., pp. 103–9. On the interesting question of the Roman confraternities cf. Mommsen and Marquardt, *Römische Staatsverwaltung*, iii. 131–142; and Boissier, *La Religion Romaine aux temps des Antonins* (Paris, 1884), vol. ii., pp. 239–304. Loening in his *Geschichte des deutschen Kirchenrechts*, and Allard in his *Histoire des Persécutions pendant la première moitié du IIIe siècle*, give valuable details on the use of the civil right of association among the Christians. See also Cagnat, *L'Armée Romaine d'Afrique* (Paris, 1892), p. 457, for the military colleges and savings associations.

## A CHRISTIAN POMPEII.[1]

ORIENTAL history offers no more splendid and picturesque pageant than the story of Syria. Placed midway between East and West, across the path of the world's great conquerors, it has had a fateful share in all the great dynastic and religious revolutions of the past. If its people have been more or less passive observers, humble victims of great ambitions, the soil itself has been the theatre on which the mightiest games of statecraft and conquest have been played out. In the course of ages it has been the prey of Assyrians, from whom it takes its name; of Egyptians, Persians, Greeks, Romans, Armenians, Arabs, Turcomans, Mongols, Mamelukes, and the Ottoman.

The original independence of the small kingdoms into which it was once divided was lost

[1] The reader may consult with profit the monumental work of Count Melchior de Vogüé, *L'Architecture civile et religieuse de la Syrie Centrale* (Paris, 1865–77); also, the preface of Rev. George Williams to Neale's posthumous Patriarchate of Antioch (London, 1873), and Choisy, *L'Art de bâtir chez les Byzantins* (Paris, 1882).

some eight centuries before our era, since when the inhabitants of this rich land have known only changes of servitude. Under the successors of Alexander the Great the arts and sciences of Greece were introduced among the Semitic peoples of Syria, and a Western culture and refinement superimposed upon the older Oriental civilizations. In time the Roman legion supplanted the Macedonian phalanx, and for several centuries Syria partook of the Roman destinies, becoming an integral part of the vast mass of Mediterranean empire which the military genius and statesmanship of Rome had welded and riveted in almost indissoluble cohesion. Roughly speaking, it was on the soil of Syria, between the Tigris and the great inland sea, that Rome and Parthia disputed the mastery of the world in the ever-memorable days from Sylla to Trajan, and four centuries later the same blood-soaked soil was trampled by the locust-like armies of Persia, swooping down upon the defenceless provinces of the decaying Roman State. Rome and Persia mutually exhausted one another in three centuries of almost incessant warfare, only to clear the way for Mohammed and the fanatic children of the desert. Since about the middle of the seventh century of our era Islam has held almost unbroken sway over Syria, interrupted only

by the ephemeral conquests of Byzantine Emperors and the Crusaders. With Islam the national Semitism of Syria has revived, and of the thousand years of Græco-Roman culture there remain but ruins and souvenirs.

The long, broad stretch of land which forms the easternmost shore of the Mediterranean is cut up from north to south by several parallel mountain ranges intercepted at short intervals by natural passes, through which the rivers of the western seaboard discharge their waters. It was in antiquity a land of noble forests, but is now comparatively bare of trees. The valleys and plains are naturally fertile, but demand much irrigation. Long centuries ago artificial systems were extensively applied, notably on the eastern boundaries; the Arab conquest has now cast a blight upon the land, the desert encroaches on the tilled soil, and with it the predatory Bedouin, the natural enemy of the industrious peasantry.

Here and there on the eastern slopes toward the Euphrates there are isolated oases, but as a rule the eye rests only on long stretches of steppes and swamps, which were once good arable land, producing barley, wheat, and corn, and guarded from the Saracen tribes by the Roman castles

built far in the interior of the tribesmen's country as a sort of desert police. In the better cultivated western parts of Syria there is a considerable trade in raw silks, tobacco, soap, wines, sponges, oranges, and olives. But its commercial importance has sadly diminished since the discovery of America and the consequent abandonment of the overland routes to India. Palmyra and Petra in the early ages of our era, Aleppo and Syrian Tripoli in mediæval times, enjoyed the commercial supremacy which suddenly passed to Lisbon and the nations of the West. The population, once ten millions, has sunk to less than two millions, of which the vast majority is Mohammedan. The minority is divided between the Jews and Christians. There are some half-heathen Ansarieh in the North and a small remnant of the curious mediæval tribe of the Assassins.

Syria is pre-eminently the land of ruins. Even the ancient Canaanite and Phœnician peoples have left their mark in the great olive and wine presses of stone and the profound artificial caverns in the mountain sides. The Hittites and the Assyrians, the Nabatæan princes and the Ghassanides have also left traces of their passage on inscribed stones and on the massive rock walls of the passes

in the hills. It was only the other day that the Holy City of the warlike Hittites was recognized not far from Homs, the ancient Emesa. But by far the greater part of the ruins of Syria are those of the Greek and Roman civilizations. They stretch away mile upon mile, a very luxuriance of shattered walls of granite and toppling columns of marble. They are the precious quarries out of which the Arab has built his mosques and his dwelling-places, and out of which modern scholars draw the most useful information upon matters of ancient history, legends, mythology, art, and the manners and habits of the Græco-Roman world.

Under the cloudless skies of this charming land and among an unprogressive or nomadic people these splendid relics of remote ages have been suffered to exist, subject to few other adverse influences than the local earthquakes and the natural wear and tear of the passing centuries. Here and there the domed tombs of Arab saints, the castles of the Crusaders and the minarets of the Mohammedan mosques relieve the monotony of ruined temples, tombs, villas, and cities, once the architectonic dress of the most elegant and humane of civilizations. The ruins of ancient Tyre are yet visible beneath the encroaching waves of

the Mediterranean, and in the neighborhood stand yet the walls and pillars of the great cathedral whose dedication sermon was preached by Eusebius, and whose beauties have been described by the same eloquent pen in the first quarter of the fourth century. The site of Sidon, the Venice of antiquity, is yet visible, and the immense shell heaps, the refuse of the great purple-dying factories, still encumber the earth.

The traveller may yet trace the remains of ancient Antioch, the Queen of the Orient, its huge quadrilateral, its three hundred towers, the great rock citadel, the embankment of Justinian, and other historical landmarks familiar to the readers of ancient history. The marble colonnades of Baalbek and Palmyra are still in part erect. Whole cities still stand in silent desolation, crumbling by inches, like the magnificent Apamæa (Hamah) and the great rock city of Petra, with its temples, colonnades, palaces, and tombs hewn out of the face of the red sandstone cliffs, a *replica* of the Buddhist rock temples of Ellora and Ajanta. Wherever one goes in this marvellous land he stumbles upon extensive ruins, whose names and destination are too often undecipherable. He moves sadly among marble porticos and fallen palaces, and finds on all sides

> Weed and wallflower grown
> Matted and massed together, hillocks heaped
> On what were chambers, arch crush'd, column
> Strewn in fragments, choked-up vaults, frescoes
> Steeped in subterranean damps, where the owl peeped,
> Deeming it midnight.

Among the débris of the Græco-Roman civilization in the Orient the most interesting and valuable are, without doubt, the ruined Christian cities of Northern, Central, and Southeastern Syria. The latter group is situated in the Hauran, the ancient Ituræa, on the border of the Arabian desert; the second group within the triangle formed by the towns of Hamah, Aleppo, and Antake, in the north, corresponding to the ancient Apamæa, Berœa, and Antioch. Within these limits, the local tradition says, are the ruins of three hundred and sixty-five Christian cities. There are at least one hundred sites clearly recognizable by the modern archæologist. They are no ordinary ruins, but cities almost intact, with their dwellings, churches, tombs; their kitchens, wine- and oil-presses; their regular alignment of streets; their gardens and opulent villas. Everything is as the day they were deserted, excepting such displacements as have been caused by earthquakes and the elements. In many places one needs only to

restore the woodwork and the interior decorations, replace the fallen stones in their courses and clear away the drifted earth and the shrubbery to see again the every-day life of the Christian Syrians from the fourth to the sixth centuries, for this is the period to which, with an absolute certainty, all this wealth of architecture belongs.

On many of the buildings there are dates inscribed over the doors or windows, in Greek letters, and according to the Syrian era of the Seleucides, easily reducible to our Christian era. The earliest date is A.D. 331, and the latest A.D. 565. On all sides the eye rests upon Christian symbols, the cross, the monogram of Christ, the Alpha and Omega. Pious quotations from the Psalms are carved over the lintels of the doors and on the walls of the elegant sepulchres. Many churches, if roofed and floored, might be used at once, the pillars and arches, the apse, the vestries, the altar foundations, are so perfect. Elsewhere throughout the ancient world the chief monuments of the private life of the ancients have disappeared, and we acquire an insight into it only through their literature and the remnants of artistic decoration. Here we have the very dwellings of the ancients and can study certain phases of their private life in its minutest details and in several of its most

important relations. These monuments are to the student of ancient Christian manners and belief what Pompeii is to the student of the classic world of Greece and Rome.

"Walking through these deserted streets, abandoned courts, and lonely porticoes," says M. De Vogue, "where the vine embraces every mutilated column, the soul is oppressed with thoughts similar to those that Pompeii suggests. It is true that the climate of Syria has not protected these treasures as tenderly as the ashes of Vesuvius those of Pompeii, yet we are more profoundly impressed by their novelty, since the civilization spread out before us is much less known than that of the Augustan age.

"These hundred cities and villages scattered over as many square miles of territory, form an *ensemble* from which it is impossible to separate any part; it is all so intimately correlated, and reveals in every detail the same style, the same obscure Christian epoch from the fourth to the seventh century. As though by magic we are again in those remote ages and live their life; not the humble, timid, dolorous life of the catacombs, but an easy, opulent, artistic life, such as is led in great marble houses, splendidly furnished, provided with galleries and covered porticoes, gardens,

vineyards, wine-presses, and all the appurtenances of comfort. There are large subterraneous kitchens and stables, elegant baths and broad squares surrounded by colonnades. Over the greater part of the gateways are seen crosses and the monogram of Christ, while Christian inscriptions are to be read on all sides. Unlike the vain pagan inscriptions, they seldom mention proper names—only pious sentences, scriptural phrases, symbols, and dates are inscribed on the stone. The very selection of texts betrays a period quite subsequent to the victory of the Church. There is a tone of victory resonant in every line from the verse of the psalmist, cut in great red letters on the lintel among splendid sculptures, to the humble *graffito* of the obscure Christian painter who tries his brush on the wall of a sepulchre, and in his unconscious enthusiasm traces in Greek the words of the Labarum: By this sign shalt thou conquer."

It was meet and natural that the first artistic efflorescence of Christianity should take place on the soil of Syria. It was at Antioch, in the immediate neighborhood of these monuments, that the name of Christians was first applied as a term of opprobrium to the followers of Jesus. It was at Damascus that their great Apostle Paul was

converted and began his wondrous career. It was along the Syrian coast, among the numerous jewries, that the faith was first preached outside Judæa. The ancient Clementine Homilies and Recognitions, an extremely venerable Christian romance, have their scene on the Syrian coast. Several of the most important documents of early Christian literature were written here — Syriac translations of the Scripture, Greek apocryphal legislation of the apostles, apocryphal gospels, ancient and popular hymns, catechisms, gospel harmonies, and the like. Later a splendid school of Christian literature sprang up, represented by such men as St. James of Nisibis, St. Ephrem, James of Sarūg, the author of the Edessene Chronicle, and others whose works are eagerly studied to-day. It was on this soil that the best Christian schools were opened and flourished longest— Cæsarea, Edessa, Nisibis. The first Christian Emperor, Philip the Arab, came from the Syrian city of Bostra, in the Hauran. The Syrian Archelaus first refuted in person the author of Manichæism. Monasticism flourished here as early as in Egypt, and the Syrian Church was the first to carry the faith to Persia, India, among the wandering Saracen tribes at the end of the fourth century, and in the seventh as far as China. The last

refuge of the immoral heathen cults was in the Syrian sanctuaries, and the last Christian blood spilled by the heathen mobs was shed in Syria. The first Christian kingdom was the little Syrian state of the Abgars of Edessa in the second century.

Most of these Christian monuments are grouped topographically on the plateau of the Hauran, in the southeastern part of Syria, and in the centre, within the triangle formed by the towns of Hamah, Aleppo, and Antake. For the present we confine ourselves to the latter group, in many respects the more instructive and touching. Hamah is the ancient Apamæa of Syria, one of the several towns which bore that name.

The Macedonian Seleucides lavished untold sums on its construction. Even to-day long rows of marble pillars mark the lines of the streets and the rich materials of its construction lie around in immense heaps of cornices and friezes, plinths and fluted shafts. There are few places where the elegant Hellenic culture has left more splendid traces of its passage. From Hamah the traveller reaches the Arab village of El-Barah, where many of the most important of the ancient Christian ruins are to be seen.

El-Barah itself and the neighboring villages

of Bechoulla, Moudjeleia, Khirbet-Hass, Dana, and others offer to the curious investigator a sight not easily forgotten. On all sides of the plateau and on the crests of all the neighboring hills arise the imposing ruins of churches, houses, baths, and tombs, relics of the refined civilization of Christian Syria from thirteen to fifteen centuries ago. Outside of Pompeii we meet nowhere such abundant remains of the domestic architecture of the ancients. In many cases the houses only need the replacement of the slanting roof and the floors to be again habitable. They are constructed without mortar, cement, or clamps, out of great blocks of white limestone, which is found in deep strata throughout this region and hardens by exposure. Usually they are two stories in height. In the Orient the limits of domestic and public life are much more sharply defined than in the West; hence we find the outer walls of these dwellings without windows or openings, save the occasional traces of balconies, which perhaps supported a wooden kiosk, as is the custom in the East. The rigid street line is broken only by a covered vestibule, on one side of which is a little opening for the inspection of visitors and on the other a niche destined to hold a lamp.

Passing through the vestibule we enter a large

court, on the opposite side of which, facing the south, rises the elegant façade of the house, with its two rows of superimposed columns, united by low parapets of stone. These porticoes are richly sculptured, and there is an air of classic grace and solidity about the whole edifice. The pent roof is wanting, and the floors, but the traces of the supports of the beams are yet visible, and sometimes the stone floors are yet intact, resting on parallel lines of arcades. Even the outhouses and the perishable appurtenances of the great villa are yet in existence, and their form and destination easily distinguishable.

The kitchens, the stables, the wine- and olive-presses, the courtyards for the laborers and servants, the shape and limits of the family gardens, are there, often almost complete, in some cases wanting only the portions that time has destroyed. The hand of man has spared these edifices. It is the border region of the Bedouin and the peasant, and the tents of the former were ever in past centuries more numerous than the poor huts of the latter. At Moudjeleia, near El-Barah, is a curious kitchen cut out of the solid rock, with a staircase of the same art, a great stone fireplace, and niches, rings, and other culinary furniture cut out of the same material. In the same village

is a stable built in similar fashion, with stone mangers.

At El-Barah the traveller may see one of the numerous wine-presses of the country, a huge basalt vat, with stone supports for the simple but perfect machinery, which has not changed in character since the time these presses were built. When we read over the door the Latin inscription laudatory of the gifts of Bacchus, we are suddenly reminded of the awful visitation which has fallen upon Syria since the middle of the seventh century of our era. The streets of El-Barah were narrow and cheerless. They ran between rows of windowless walls, and their large polygonal blocks were crossed at intervals by little channels to prevent the horses from slipping. We can trace yet the ruts of the chariot wheels on these ancient pavements, and around the town are yet to be seen long lines of rough-hewn pillars, which mark the once jealously kept boundaries of these elegant villas.

In fact all these ruins seem to belong to villa-communities or pleasure-demesnes. Nowhere are there any traces of theatre, stadia, or hippodromes, so essential to the municipal life of the Græco-Roman. No inscriptions put up by the senate

and people or by the decurions have been found, no tablets expressing the gratitude of the municipality for the erection of baths or theatres, the reparation of aqueducts, roads, bridges, and the like.

This group of the Christian ruins of Syria seems made up of the sumptuous *villegiature* of the neighboring Antioch. The ruins which dot the hills between the humid plain on which the Queen of the Orient was partly built and the vast desert of slopes in the direction of the Euphrates are those of the summer houses of the rich Christians of Antioch. Even to-day in the changeless Orient the Beyrouth merchant must have his summer house on the slopes of Libanus. In those days Antioch had a population of about one million, one-tenth of which was Christian at the opening of the fourth century. She was the mistress of the Orient, and her streets and squares swarmed with a conglomerate multitude gathered from Britain to the boundaries of India and China.

In the whole neighborhood there were no more charming or restful sites than the crests of the Eastern hills, where there was an abundance of stone and wood, a fertile soil and a picturesque combination of mountain, slope, and valley. The richest example of those suburban ruins is that

of Deir-Lobat (Convent of Elizabeth), which may once have been a Christian convent, but was originally a private villa. It differs from the other ruins of domestic architecture about El-Barah in internal arrangement. All the rooms open on a long central hall, which bears yet the traces of its ancient stucco ornamentation. In the cellars cut in the solid rocks are seen yet the great stone jars for the preservation of wine or oil. Attached to the imposing ruins are large gardens, in which are the family sepulchres, some of them hewn out of the solid rock. There is one of especial grace, a little, open temple supported by twelve colonnettes, covering the sarcophagi of two members of the family. It is or was (for it has fallen lately) built in one corner of the spacious garden, and the Roman archæologists have taken advantage of this discovery to illustrate the manner in which the rich families of Rome began the formation of the Roman cemeteries about their own family burial-places.

Over two of the doorways in the central hall of this villa the monogram of Christ, i.e., the two first letters of His name in Greek (X P), is sculptured. This shows the Christian nature of the edifice. It is by similar symbols and by the nu-

merous inscriptions on the doors and windows of the houses, as well as by the ruins of the churches, that we are able to detect the Christian origin of this interesting phase of civilization. Over the doorways of most of the villas and houses, or on the window cornices, the monogram of Christ is found surrounded by elegant tracery, sometimes between the Greek Alpha and Omega, and once between two peacocks, the symbols of resurrection and immortality. Pious sentences in Greek, often verses of the Psalms, are inscribed on the lintels of the doorways or over the windows, such as one may yet read over the doorways in the ancient Catholic cities of Germany and Italy. Thus, over a door at El-Barah, "Christ is forever triumphant." Over another at Roueiha, "There is but one God; Christ is God." Over the outside door of a house at Dellouza, "Lord, be gracious to this house and to all who dwell in it"; and over the inside door, "If God be with us, who is against us? Glory be Thine forever."

At Khirbet-Hass, over a doorway, is the significant formula, "Ichthys (the symbolical fish, the Son of God, our Saviour, the Blessed Eucharist). Alleluia." These are the thoughts of the first generation, which had come through the persecution of Diocletian and shared in the triumph of

Constantine and the long-thirsted-for peace of the Church (312 A.D.). We hear again from these dumb stones the heart-stirring tones of Eusebius in the famous chapters on the battle of the Milvian Bridge. In fact, the oldest of the Christian portal inscriptions (at Refadi) is dated A.D. 331, within twenty years of the defeat of Maxentius, and reads: "Thalaris built this house. Christ, be gracious! There is only one God." The architecture of these houses is so homogeneous that the general description of one suffices for all, and the calculation of the date to which any one belongs would suffice to locate the whole complex within its proper limits; yet in this central group there are more than thirty buildings bearing the date of their erection sculptured on the façade. There is no date earlier than A.D. 331 and none later than A.D. 565. Within these limits were constructed all the monuments whose vast ruins yet cumber the ground.

Sometimes the name of the architect is incised together with the date. Thus we find the architect Damas mentioned on a building dated Jan. 29, A.D. 378; Domnus, with the date of Aug. 1, A.D. 431, and Airamis, Aug. 13, A.D. 510. Elsewhere is the quaint inscription, "The power of God and Christ built this house. The Lord was

the architect." It is remarkable that the doorways have withstood the ravages of time better than the other parts of the buildings. In the section of the ruins about El-Barah there are some fifty standing in perfect order, owing to their massive construction. Over one at Deir-Seta is the inscription, " There is one God who succours all, A.D. 412," and in the village built at the foot of the Convent of St. Simeon Stylites we read over a great portal: "Simeon†. God bless our going in and coming out." This invocation of a saint is not alone. Over some doorways, especially in the churches, the initials of the names of Christ, Michael, and Gabriel are sculptured, and the same are found occasionally over the vestibules of tombs and in the upper chambers of the church towers.

It would seem as if there was a design to assert the *cultus* of the angels in an orthodox manner. In the fourth century the Council of Laodicea had to interfere with an heretical form of this *cultus*.

It need not surprise us to find here the ruins of public baths. They were an indispensable necessity among the ancient Græco-Roman peoples. Though the early Christians deprecated the abuses of the baths, they never forbade them. The

Apostolic Constitutions, a work compiled in this period and for the use of the episcopate of Syria and Asia Minor, regulates in a Christian manner the frequentation of the baths. At El-Barah they were all the more necessary since there were neither rivers nor springs in the vicinity, and the population had to depend largely on the use of cisterns. Among the buildings still partly perfect is an ancient bath.

The visitor may yet make out the vestibule, the wicket where the small bathing fee was paid, the common hall, the sweating-baths, and the tepid-room. The hot-water baths, the great cistern and the reservoir near the furnaces, the stone conduits for the water after it had passed over heated pebbles, are still visible. The Arabs give the name of café to a neighboring building with an upper and a lower portico. It may well be, for the luxury of the ancient Roman baths reached a degree scarcely credible in our modern world.

A special interest attaches to the numerous ruins of tombs and sepulchres which meet one at every step on these silent, deserted hills. Sometimes they are subterranean, and everything about them, even the little porticoes, is cut out of the

solid rock. The doors and hinges of such sepulchres are of black basalt, the white limestone wearing away too easily. There are several specimens of diminutive temples, graceful *ædiculæ*, with columns and baldacchinos. At Roueiha the eye is especially pleased with two classic tombs whose severe and simple lines stand out with sharp distinctness against the cloudless blue of the sky and the stretches of green pasturage. In many tombs the square mortuary chamber is terminated by a pyramid, which would seem to have been illuminated on certain occasions.

There are also domic tombs, with little cupolas resting upon the walls and certain springing projections, in which the architect traces the earliest Christian use of the pendentives which made St. Sophia possible. The domic tombs of the Arabs in the Orient seem to have been copied from these models. Scattered over the same area are many single sepulchres, stone sarcophagi of Egyptian style, made of single blocks of stone, with sloping covers decorated with upright ornaments at the corners and a cross in the centre. From the earliest ages the Christians paid special care to the resting-places of their dead. The bodies of the departed were temples of the Holy Ghost, vehicles of immortal souls and

destined to rise again. The liens of communion were not broken by death, but strengthened by the mutual offices of prayer and intercession.

The Christian unity, welded by the fires of persecution and general outlawry, grew still more compact through this incessant intercourse with the spiritual world, where the hunted Christian saw the enthroned Christ, the prophets, angels, apostles, and saints, the absence of all evil and wrong, the final triumph of the suffering brethren and saints. It was in this spirit that the Roman faithful loved to haunt the catacombs, to adorn the resting-places of the dead, and later to bury the martyrs beneath the altars of the Christian sacrifice. The rich Antiochene Christians of the fourth and fifth centuries did not differ from their Roman brethren. The tombs are more elegant and solid, as becomes people of wealth, merchant princes, officers of the State. But there are no laudatory inscriptions, no cynical scoffings at life and fate, no helpless moanings, such as the Greek and Roman funereal epigraphy offers us in abundance. The cross or the monogram of Christ is usually sculptured on the doors or the walls of the sepulchre. Pious inscriptions from the Psalms are met with frequently. Thus, at Moudjeleia, "Be-

cause Thou, O Lord, art my hope; Thou hast made the most High my refuge. There shall no evil come to thee, nor shall the scourge come near thy dwelling" (Ps. xc. 9–10). At Hass, "Blessed be he that cometh in the name of the Lord. The Lord is God, and He hath shone upon us" (Ps. cxvii. 26, 27). On the cornice of one of the cupola tombs at Roueiha we meet the following naive epitaph: "Bizzos, son of Pardos. I have lived well, I have arrived well, I repose well. Pray for me." It recalls the *Live in Christ, live in the Lord,* of the Roman catacombs. The tombs of Diogenes, at Hass, and Eusebius, the Christian, not far from Antioch, are worthy of special mention. The epitaph on the latter tomb reads: "†To Eusebius† the Christian. Glory be to the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. August 27, A.D. 369." This use of the Christian name near the city where it first took its origin is remarkable. The doxology sounds like a defiance to the triumphant Arians, the contemporary, Valens, the Emperor, and Euzoius, the Bishop of Antioch and once the intimate friend of Arius himself. We seem to hear the echoes of that awful battle for the divinity of Christ, which was nowhere fiercer than in Syria, the land of its true origin, and especially at Antioch, the stronghold of the earliest

critical and rationalizing school in the Catholic Church.

The clearest evidence of the character of these villa-communities is found in the number of Christian churches yet lifting their venerable walls, which could be easily repaired and made to bear wooden roofs, in accordance with the original plans. The finest monuments in these ruined cities and villages are always the churches. They possess the best sites, and the grounds allotted to them were ample, as can be seen from the numerous ecclesiastical buildings frequently gathered about the house of God.

Long before the advent of Constantine the Christians had public edifices of their own. Diocletian destroyed their splendid church in the highest part of Nicomedia. There were forty churches at Rome in the first quarter of the fourth century, and such churches as St. Cæcilia, St. Mary across the Tiber, St. Praxedes, and St. Pudentiana are very much older, to say the least. With the conversion of Constantine came a complete renovation of the old ecclesiastical edifices. New ones were built; the temples and temple lands fell frequently to the Church; the piety and zeal of the emperors, bishops, and faithful contributed largely. Before the end of the fourth

century the Christians could boast that they had an architecture of their own. While following the noble traditions of the old classic art, they introduced of a necessity many modifications and improvements, though they kept the general forms of the basilica, or public court-house, and the round or octagon temple.

The Christian church differed substantially from the pagan temple. The latter was the mysterious abode of the idol, entered only by the members of his priesthood, obscurely lighted, removed usually from the public thoroughfares—the share of the people being only that of passive onlookers. But the Christian church was a meeting-place of Christ's mystic body. Its members were a spiritual priesthood by participation, though the power of offering the commemorative sacrifice, and a certain defined authority, were restricted to a chosen number. The Christians, unlike the pagans, had a doctrine and a discipline to learn and observe. They were one family knit by the bond of love, had a common spiritual banquet, and the obligation to hear the word of their founder preached. Thus from the beginning the Christian architecture had within it the germs of a fruitful evolution, even though it borrowed the shell of the classic basilica or temple.

The Christians at once enlarged the bema, made it the apse for the altar and the clergy. They added the vestibule and the front court for the faithful in various states of probation, the sacristy and treasury for the preparations for the sacred rites and to receive the offerings of the faithful. They built side naves for room and opened more windows in the clere-story for light. They introduced large fountains in the open court for the purposes of ritual ablution. We have a good description of the early Christian basilica of this period in the Church History of Eusebius, apropos of the dedication (A.D. 314) of the cathedral of Tyre. He mentions the outer wall surrounding a court, just as one sees before the Roman basilica of St. Cecilia, the central fountain for the ablutions which has since dwindled down to the holy-water font at the church door, the vestibules, the naves, the windows of the clere-story, with their wooden trellis-work, the cedar roof, the altar, and the railing of precious wood, with the elegant mosaic pavements.

The other Christian churches of Syria were no doubt similar to that of Tyre. In fact, at El-Barah and in the neighboring ruins one can yet trace many of the ancient details of the Christian churches. The monolith columns, often grouped

and forming great pillars to support the roof, are yet standing in some places. There are churches which yet possess clere-story and façade in spite of earthquake and storm. The jutting corbels to support the rafters are still in place. The elegant apse, with its sculptured arch, fascinates the beholder. Even the *diaconicum* or sacristy and the *gazophylacium* or treasury have escaped destruction, the former opening on the choir and the latter on one of the lateral naves. It was to this treasury or bureau that the people brought their gifts, which were entered on the church books and read out by the deacon from the altar—a custom as old as the time of St. Cyprian, and by the Church of Africa borrowed perhaps from the mother Church of Rome.

To complete the early Christian Church in some of the specimens yet extant we would only have to add the cubic mass of the altar, the railing of sculptured wood, with the uprights and curtains to be drawn at the consecration, and a lattice-work through the centre of the main nave to separate the men from the women. It is not easy to judge whether the roof was finished in open woodwork or in coffered compartments. Certainly the roof was often painted and gilded, so much so as to be a distraction to the auditory

of even such preachers as St. John Chrysostom. The façade of these churches is usually an ornamented reproduction of a transverse cut of the nave or naves, following faithfully the main outlines of the latter. The doors are protected by porches with columns, and the monogram of Christ or some pious symbol is sculptured above the lintel. We do not meet with many inscriptions in this group of ecclesiastical ruins, and none of the churches are dated, though their approximate age may easily be gathered from the study of their details. These buildings are quite large, from 100 to 200 feet in length, about the size of an ordinary parish church. Yet one was scarcely sufficient for each community. The early Greek Church was wont to have but a single altar and to allow but one Mass on feast days. Hence we find three churches at El-Barah, two at the neighboring Moudjeleia, and two or three close by at Roueiha. This grouping of small churches is nothing new in Christian architecture—it has been noticed in Armenia and Russia; we are all well acquainted with the "Seven Churches" of Ireland. This is another indication of the strong influence that the Orient exercised on the early Irish, as well in their art as in their ecclesiasticism.

Naturally the churches were numerous among a population nearly all Christian; the local traditions say that there were once three hundred within the triangle formed by Hamah, Aleppo, and Antake. We can well believe this, for we know from Theodoret, a famous Syrian bishop and scholar of the fifth century, that his diocese of Cyrrhus, only forty miles square, contained eight hundred churches. The ornamentation of this Syro-Christian architecture breathes throughout a spirit at once classic and Christian. The cornices, friezes, and capitals are trimmed with the acanthus leaf. The egg-ornament and dentilated foliage are frequently met with. Simple but meaningful symbols of Christian teaching are everywhere reproduced, such as the monogram of Christ and the cross. There are still others which transport us to the catacombs, and show that the religious art cycle of Rome was common to the Christian communities throughout the Empire—thus the ivy-leaf punctuation on the inscriptions, the Agnus Dei with the cross standing upon his haunches, the little circular loaves of bread with the sign of the cross indented on them, the bunches of grapes and sheaves of wheat to represent the Eucharist, the palms of victory.

Elsewhere we see the Alpha and Omega and plain Greek crosses. On a tomb are seen once-sculptured lion heads. We cannot say what sculptures of human figures there were; such were most likely to be destroyed by the Mohammedans. Over one of the side doors at Kalb-Louzeh are see two mutilated human busts representing the archangels Michael and Gabriel, whose names are incised above. The church seems to have been built in the sixth century.

Among the earliest accessories of the Christian church were certain constructions of secondary importance, such as towers, baptisteries, chapels, clergy-houses, and the like. The early Syro-Christian architecture offers us many well-preserved specimens of such buildings. The earliest example of a tower attached to a Christian church is found at Tafkha, in Northern Syria, where the ruined basilica (A.D. 350–450) has a three-story tower. At Kalb-Louzeh and Tourmanim, there are also towers, not detached from the church, as is usually the case in the West at a later period, but worked into the general plan of the façade. At Khirbet-Hass the bases of lateral towers are seen at each side of the choir. It is not so easy to say whence the idea of these towers came to the Syrian builders. Some have sought it in the

influence of Indian and Assyrian models, others in an ancient tradition that Christ was buried in a pyramidal tomb, such as yet exist in Syria. In the neighborhood of Palmyra tall, square towers with several stories have been found which were used as family sepulchres. Perhaps, after all, these towers were meant only to enclose the staircases leading to the open gallery above the main entrance. It is not impossible that they were meant for bells—large bells of molten metal appear in the West at the end of this period—or for trumpets; at least, in the fourth century the latter served to call the monks to prayer. The Syrian churches had baptisteries attached to them; a notable hexagonal specimen thirty feet in diameter is still in part erect at Deir-Seta.

Many of the basilicas were provided with chapels, some of which are in a tolerable state of preservation. Around the larger churches are yet the unroofed buildings for the use of the clergy and the church functionaries. Some of these edifices, as at El-Barah, were originally erected for libraries and schools, which, in the Orient at least, have been always connected with the churches. The necessity of providing capable men who could preach the Christian doctrine and administer the church affairs forces us to suppose these schools,

if we did not otherwise know of their existence. They appear first at Alexandria, but in the third and fourth centuries it is Syria which offers us the best and largest establishments of this kind—Antioch, Cæsarea, Jerusalem, Edessa, and Nisibis. There are positive traces of a catechetical school at Rome in the second century, and from the beginning of the fourth we can follow the evolution of the Lateran school and the growth of its library, long the resting-place of the papal archives.

Among the canons attributed to the sixth general council of Constantinople (A.D. 680) is one to the effect that presbyters in country towns and villages should have schools to teach all such children as were sent to them, for which they should expect no reward nor take anything, except the parents of the children thought fit to make a voluntary oblation. That this was only an ancient custom is clear from the observation of Socrates on the education of Julian, that in his youth the latter frequented the church "where in those days the school was kept."

The oldest of the dated churches of Syria are to be found in the southern group, in the Hauran. Here the ancient church of St. George, at Ezra, bears the date of A.D. 515. The cathedral church

of Bostra, which rises among the ruins of a city famous in the annals of early church history, seems to have been built at the same time.

It would be useless to mention more than a few of the ruined basilicas of this central region of Syria, they differ so little in their general architecture. Those of Hass, Kalb-Louzeh, and Tourmanim may serve as examples. Of the first only one wall is standing, but that suffices to show that the church was unsurpassed in the neighborhood for elegance and solidity. The arched window-caps are made of single blocks of stone, and at the end of the ruined wall are traces which show that the church contained a private *loggia* over the choir, perhaps for some distinguished individuals. It appears to belong to the period from A.D. 350–400, and is thus one of the oldest of the region. In fact, the materials of a pagan temple have been utilized in its construction. In the same district the church of Kalb-Louzeh, in a state of almost perfect preservation, offers an excellent occasion to study the outlines and details of a Christian basilica. Only the wall of a lateral nave and a corner of the façade are wanting. The church is 114×54, the main nave 25 feet broad and the side aisles with the walls 12½ feet. The interior length is 84 feet, the rest being taken up

by a vestibule. The roof did not rest on columns, but on six great pillars set far apart, and leaving the auditorium as unobstructed as possible. The traces of the chancel railing and the lofty *iconostasis* are still visible in the choir, which is raised some three feet from the floor of the church. The sacristy and treasury are standing, and the initiated visitor recognizes the credence-table in a little mural niche within the apse. Over the sacristy and treasury are two rooms whose use is not clear. Though more beautiful, the church at Kalb-Louzeh is less complete than the church of Tourmanim, whose fine porch, *loggia*, towers, and side walls are yet in good order, though it now serves as a quarry for the Arabs. The dimensions are $120 \times 60$ feet and the breadth of the main nave 30 feet. It is built on a kind of sub-basement, and the ornamentation of the interior was quite varied, consisting of acanthus leaves, serrated and dentilated patterns, oval mouldings, and the like. "For a church of the sixth century," says a competent critic, "it is wonderful how many elements of later buildings it suggests. Even the western towers seem to be indicated, and except the four columns of the gallery, there is very little to recall the style out of which it arose."

The most marvellous of all the Christian architectural creations in Syria is the great complex of buildings on and near the Kalaat-Seman, some twenty miles east of Antioch. Only St. Peter's at Rome and the unexecuted mediæval plans of Siena and Bologna surpass them in grandeur. On a steep plateau looking over the valley of the Afrin and commanding a view of dozens of deserted villages and villas, rise the stupendous ruins of a series of churches built in honor of St. Simeon Stylites, one of the most renowned of the early Christian solitaries. Though these ruins have served at a later date as a huge Mohammedan fortress, they stand in unimpaired majesty and wrest unstinted admiration from all who make the difficult journey to behold them. Simeon Stylites (A.D. 390–459) was the most remarkable of the ancient pillar saints, an almost faultless model of mortification and self-renouncement. After several years of the ordinary solitary life he took up his abode upon the narrow summit of a column which was carried by successive degrees to a height of forty-five feet. Here he spent some thirty-seven years on a space scarcely six feet square, protected from falling by a balustrade. Every week a priest climbed up to this strange eyrie with the Blessed Eucharist, which was almost

the only food of the holy man. His days were spent in prayer with outstretched arms and in catechetical preaching to the multitudes of Christians, Arabs, Persians, and people from the remotest Orient, who came to ask the aid of his prayers. Numerous miracles are recorded of him, and his courage in defence of orthodoxy and justice was recognized in the highest imperial circles. In one sense he was the St. Bernard of his age; the Roman world looked on him with admiration and saw in his discourses the direct communications of heaven. When he died (A.D. 459) all civil and ecclesiastical Antioch came forth to bear back his remains to the queenly city, assured that they were a mightier bulwark against the Sassanides than any which human art could devise. The State was aged and decaying, confronted with insoluble problems, but it was Roman and Christian, and in its faith and secular experience found yet the means to hold off the locust-like multitudes of Persia and Arabia.

The death of Simeon did not put an end to the immense pilgrimages to the mountain and the column, now become objects of veneration from their long association with the saint. A community of monks was settled on the spot and vast

edifices built for the accommodation of the visiting multitudes. The plateau was levelled and the huge complex of churches, whose white ruins are yet standing, uplifted in honor of Simeon. In the centre a splendid two-story octagon screen, completely open to the sky, was built around the holy column, like a huge reliquary in stone. From this octagon there radiated four great churches, one towards each point of the compass. Between the octagon and each of these churches great open arches permitted the sight of the column from all sides. Moreover, there was space sufficient left between the octagon and the abutting churches for the peasantry to lead about their cattle and sheep for the blessing of the saint, who, tradition said, was seen occasionally in person, floating in the air, dressed in his long cloak and peculiar mitre. Other arches opened from the octagon upon the chapels which were built at its points of junction with the walls of the churches, and upon the external porticoes built around each of the four superb basilicas. The octagon, still standing, is over 100 feet throughout in diameter, and over 80 feet in height. The column, made of three blocks placed on a pedestal hewn out of the bed-rock, has fallen, but the base and a chipped fragment may

still be seen. The main church, the only one with an apse, is the eastern arm of the cross. Its length is 140 feet and in time a wall of separation was built, shutting it off from the octagon. The main entrance was at the extremity of the southern arm, and is yet admirably preserved. The great double entrance suggests the multitudes who once came here. The western arm of the monument is built upon a sharp declivity of the monument, the necessary level being obtained, as at Assisi, by powerful terraces and substructures, from which there is a splendid view of the valley of the Afrin, the lake of Antioch, and the crests of Amanus. There are traces of splendid coffered ceilings, mosaic pavements, and ornaments, fragments of stucco and painting. Rich marbles and sculptured woods were of course employed, as in the other churches of Syria and Palestine.

It would be too tedious to describe the great courts, the conventual or clerical buildings, the sacristies, treasuries, tombs, and cemeteries whose vast ruins are yet more than half intact. The imagination is almost overwhelmed as it tries to reconstruct this magnificent work of genius finished at once without any sign of afterthought or restoration. It is the most complete architectural

monument of the Christian Orient, and offers to the historian and the antiquarian the most perfect example of the condition of the arts in Syria at the end of the fifth century, which is the true epoch of its construction.

This summary account of the Christian ruins of Central Syria would be incomplete without a mention of the great religious hostelries of which some examples are still in excellent preservation. At the foot of Kalaat-Seman is the village of Deir-Seman, in which the ruins of a vast Christian hostelry or inn are to be seen. Such buildings were absolutely needed for the multitudes who could not be accommodated on the plateau or in private dwellings. They were usually called *Pandocheia*, and were scarcely more than large halls, only more elegant and roomy than similar monuments elsewhere. The pilgrim house at Lourdes recalls imperfectly the internal arrangement. The hostelry at Deir-Seman was a building of two stories, with external porticoes. Over the door is yet to be read the inscription: "Christ, Michael, Gabriel. This hostelry was finished on the 22d of July, A.D. 479. Christ be gracious to us. Simeon, son of . . . was the builder." At Tourmanim, whose church we have already described, are the ruins of a similar establishment. Like that at Deir-

Seman, it is a two-story building, with outside porticoes to both stories, the whole constructed of huge blocks of stone, and enclosing courtyards and cisterns. Such houses for pilgrims were not uncommon elsewhere. The Acts of Archelaus show that they were in existence in these regions two hundred years earlier, at the end of the third century, and in the fourth century we find these creations of Christian charity at Rome, Porto, Constantinople, Edessa, Cæsarea in Cappadocia, Hippo, and Lyons. In fact, every bishop was obliged to maintain a house for the hospitable shelter of strangers. Julian the Apostate attempted to galvanize the dying polytheism by establishing similar refuges for the heathen. But he came too late; the all-embracing ingenious charity of the Christians had preoccupied every channel of social beneficence. They had filled the world with hospitals, refuges for the sick and blind and poor and old, for the lepers and the foundlings; in a word, for every form of human need and misery. And in so doing they had only carried on the example of cosmopolitan charity, of which from the beginning the Roman Church was the chief exponent, closely imitated by Cyprian at Carthage and Dionysius at Alexandria. Not the least factor in the conversion of the hea-

then world were the splendid far-reaching system and spirit of Christian charities. So true is it that men are oftener drawn by the chords of Adam than by their abstract convictions.

It is evident that in Christian Syria from the fourth to the sixth centuries God and divine worship held a prominent place in public life. The church is always the largest and most elegant building in the city or village, while the private dwellings, though solid and commodious, are wanting in the luxurious richness of ornament and display lavished on the ecclesiastical buildings. Christianity, one sees, is triumphant and conscious of its victory. Mediæval Catholicism was never more outspoken than this Syrian society. Its faith is bold and assertive, its piety frank and ardent. There is not a figure nor an inscription which could offend the most delicate soul. Only belief in God and His immediate, loving care, only simple and heartfelt prayers, strike the passer-by. In the light of these new discoveries it would be worth while to examine carefully the Syriac and Greek writers of that land and epoch. They would certainly throw light upon the ruined architecture of the country, and in turn borrow illustration from it. We may well believe that the bishops and priests had much to do with this mag-

nificent development of art. There is a passage in a letter of Theodoret, bishop of Cyrrhus, north of Antioch, which shows how large a share these fifth-century bishops took in the public life of the time: "I have erected from my ecclesiastical revenues public porticoes, I have built two bridges on the largest scale. I have provided baths for the people. I found the city without supply from the river, and I furnished an aqueduct, so that water was as abundant as it had been scarce hitherto. Not a cloak, not a half penny have I accepted from any one; not a loaf of bread, not an egg has any one of my household accepted ever yet. Saving the tattered clothes in which I am clad I have allowed myself nothing." The conduct of Theodoret at Cyrrhus and of Synesius, his contemporary, at Ptolemais, reveals the Oriental episcopate of the fifth century as no less public-spirited men than their brethren of Gaul and Italy during the barbarian invasions. The Roman State had no more devoted and patriotic supporters than the highly cultured ecclesiastics who bore the brunt of the human floods that the North and the Orient rolled down upon the accumulated civilization of a thousand years.

The Christian architecture of Syria interests us not only for the grace of its proportions, the

richness of the decoration, the solemnity and noble elegance of the parts, but also because the study of it reveals the earliest genesis of the Gothic ecclesiastical style. Here in the Orient we find the first germs of the evolution of the peculiarly Christian architecture, the use of buttresses, the employment of pillars to support the roof, the pronounced ogival arches, the pendentives that permit the construction of light and elegant domes. The towers of the middle ages were anticipated in principle on the soil of Syria. The apse of the eastern arm of Kalaat-Seman recalls the best Romanesque, while the clere-stories and the corbels to support the jutting colonnettes that aid in bearing the weight of the roof are more Gothic than Roman. Architects have noticed that the same mathematical formulas have been employed in the construction of these monuments as in imperial Rome and the cities of the middle ages—a conclusive proof of the transmission of certain principles from the most ancient guilds of masons and builders. The West at all times has borrowed largely from the Orient. The Byzantine Court of the sixth, seventh, and eighth centuries was the centre of artistic skill, as is shown by the elegant presents it was wont to send to the Roman Church and the Frankish kings. Throughout the

middle ages Constantinople remained the wealthiest and most refined city of the Christians. Its artists and builders came West not only after the conquests of Mohammed and under the Iconoclasts, but in the time of Charlemagne and the Saxon Ottos. They followed in the wake of the returning Venetians; St. Mark's at Venice and St. Front at Perigueux are proofs of it. When at the end of the eleventh century Syria fell into the hands of the Crusaders, El-Barah was yet entire, and became a Latin see with a priest of Narbonne for its first occupant. In this manner the Gothic architecture is originally the work of Orientals. Its first unknown creators came from the Orient, with no intention of creating new models, but only of reproducing the elegant monuments scattered in rich profusion over the soil of Asia Minor and Syria, but nowhere more abundantly than in the latter country.

# THE "ROMAN AFRICA" OF GASTON BOISSIER.

During more than a half century the civil and military employés of France have been reconstructing the long-vanished life of their Algerian colony. They have defined its limits as a Roman possession; retraced its systems of roads, aqueducts, irrigation, and military defence; unearthed its ancient works of art and the splendors of its architecture; collected and classified its inscriptions; located and counted its cities and its sources of wealth. In a word, they have restored to the eye of the mind, in minute and faithful detail, the land and the society which were the scene of the riches and the glory of Carthage, of the hard-earned triumphs of Scipio Africanus, Pompey, and Julius Cæsar, and which, after some centuries of peaceful prosperity, beheld in rapid succession every misfortune that Moor, Vandal, or Arab could inflict upon it. Around the shores of the Mediterranean great states and mighty civiliza-

tions have for ages innumerable succeeded one another, each building upon the wreck of its predecessor, and becoming in turn the stepping-stone for the ambitions and ideals of its successor. But nowhere about the blue waters of the Inner Sea has the awful tragedy of the life of nations and races been acted out on a larger scale than on that furnished by the long strip of narrow seashore, arid desert, and mountainous uplands, known from time immemorial as Africa. Never, on so small a spot, have there been given to man so many public lessons of war and peace, success and adversity, love and hate, jealousy and ambition, pride and humiliation, as here. On this checker-board of the world one can observe better than elsewhere the origin, acme, decline, and decay of a state. Within its narrow area opposing religions have contended for the spirit of man almost from the dawn of history. Cultures and languages have chased one another across this shining arena just as the hot simooms of the desert lift in turn the long stretches of sand, and with scarcely greater traces of their passage. From the unknowable aborigines down to the zouaves of France, what a procession of humanity unrolls its long lines from the Nile to Mount Atlas—Egyptian, Persian, Mede, Phœnician, Greek, Kelt and Kelti-

berian, Roman, Teuton, Saracen, and Turk! It has been ever "Dark Africa," a land of night and mystery; ever beckoning men to pierce its veil of secrecy, and ever lifting against them its impassable barriers of rock and sand.

In a book no less entertaining than useful, M. Gaston Boissier relates the great labors by which within fifty years the enterprise, public and private, of Frenchmen has won back to the domain of historical science the long-lost province of Roman Africa. M. Boissier does not pretend to treat of Egypt and the Cyrenaica, even within the limits of the Roman domination. He confines himself strictly to the territory known to the ancients as Africa proper (*Ἀφρικὴ ἡ ἰδίως*), from the pillars of Hercules to the basin of the Great Syrtis, or from the western slopes of Mount Atlas to the territory of Barka. Here, during more than eight centuries, from the end of the second Punic War (B.C. 201) to the battle of Sufetula (A.D. 647), the influence of Rome grew, flourished, and decayed. It is, therefore, properly called Roman Africa, and the volume before us relates what scholars have been able to gather from modern researches among its ruins concerning its civil physiognomy during the memorable centuries when it was the brightest jewel in the imperial crown.

Who were the aborigines of these mountains and deserts whom an all-compelling fate brought under the yoke of Rome? Our most ancient authority is the Jugurtha of Sallust, in which that historian claims to have learned from an historical work of one of their kings, Hiempsal II., that they were descended from the remnants of the army of Hercules, disbanded in Spain after the hero's death. The Persians, Medes, and Armenians of that army crossed the straits to Africa. The former intermarried with the semianimal Getulian, and from them descended the Nomads or Numidians, who eventually settled in the territory known after as Carthage. From the intermarriage of the Medes and Armenians with the Libyans came the Mauri or Moors. It is probable, thinks M. Boissier, that Hiempsal knew as much about the origin of his barbarous subjects as any chief of the modern Kabyles or Touaregs, and that the pages translated for Sallust from the royal history were only the Greek dress of a vague, dim legend in which figured some African deity with attributes like those of Hercules. Nevertheless, any Algerian market-day will show a remarkable diversity of types, and it may be that this is owing to emigration from across the straits, as well as from the deserts to the south or east.

Certain it is that the ancient Berber or Libyan tongue has been rediscovered, that its peculiar alphabet and Ogham-like funerary literature are now known to some extent, and that it extended its domain far into the heart of Africa, if it be not yet a spoken tongue and identical with the *tefinagh* of the Touaregs.

It is at the end of the second Punic War that these hardy tribesmen come first within the ken of authentic history. The necessities of self-defence and the barbarian love of plunder had ranged them now on the side of Carthage and now on that of Rome. The rivalries and mutual jealousy of Syphax and Gula ended in the overthrow of the former and the establishment in the good graces of Rome of Massinissa, the son of the latter. A man of infinite wiles and resources, rising fresh and undaunted from complete defeat, Moor to the marrow in his fiery passions and restless energy, Massinissa lived to the age of ninety, the powerful ally of Rome. From his capital of Cirta, set upon a jutting plateau or tongue-like hill, all garlanded with myrtle-clad eminences and odorous olive groves, he harassed the Queen of the Mediterranean, by turns pirate and raider, now leading a wild *razzia* among the villas or country-seats of the Punic merchant princes, and

again flying on the wings of the wind to the mountain fastnesses of his home. The curule chair and the crown of gold, the palm-embroidered toga and the ivory baton of power, were conferred on him by Rome, but the Berber had to pay, like many others, the bitter price of his disguised servitude. Witness the romance of his Sophonisba, so admirably portrayed in the frescoes of Pompeii. After his death, the true relations with Rome of the once free tribes became clear. They had been enmeshed by the arts of the City, and from equal allies had become her protégés. The sons and grandsons of Massinissa chafed sorely under the surveillance of Rome, more hateful than their loose subjection to Carthage, and the embers of unrest and opposition broke out at last into the Jugurthan War, that *bellum magnum et atrox variaque victoria,* which Sallust has painted in immortal colors, forgetting no essential trait of African life, but intent mostly on stigmatizing forever in a calm, cool, objective way, after the manner of Thukydides, the ineptness, venality, corruption, and utter degeneracy of the little body of oligarchs who mismanaged from the banks of the Tiber the true interests of the Roman people in their African provinces. Jugurtha was "a genuine barbarian chief—bold, reckless, faithless,

and sanguinary—but fickle and wavering in policy, and incapable of that steadiness of purpose which can alone command success." He would long since have been forgotten were it not for the genius of his Roman portrait-painter, and his tragic death (B.C. 104) in the Mamertine, over whose roof Marius led his veterans, in the pomp of triumph, while the grandson of Massinissa lay gasping beneath in the double shadows of prison and death. His grandson, Juba I., embraced the side of Pompey in the civil wars, and paid for his unhappy forecast on the field of Thapsus (B.C. 46). Both he and Petreius, the Pompeian general, died in a suicidal duel, and his son, Juba II., succeeded to the doubtful honors of the Numidian kingship. For this Juba the kingdom of Mauretania was created. He married Cleopatra Selene, the daughter of Antony and Cleopatra, and took up his residence at Iol, which he rebuilt and called Cæsarea, and which is now the coast city of Cherchell, somewhat west of Algiers. The sense of Roman prepotency and the charm of Greek culture and manners, brought close to him by association with the well-bred daughter of Antony and Cleopatra, made another man of Juba II. He cultivated literary, musical, and dramatic tastes, took to history, and was known as "the

best historian among kings," and became the patron of men of letters, artists, and architects. Cherchell yields, from time to time, traces of his baths, theatres, and porticoes; above all, numerous statues have been found there, fine *repliche* of the masterpieces of Athens, Rhodes, Pergamos, and Antioch. Juba and Cleopatra found a solace in the arts of peace and in self-culture for the stormy greatness of their ancestors. But even this self-effacement could not stay the hand of fate. Their son Ptolemy was called to Rome by Caligula, where he succeeded in offending the vanity of the Emperor, and was starved to death under very cruel circumstances. With him ended the Numidian line and the tribal glories of Libya. Thenceforth Mauretania became, like Numidia, a Roman province, under the administration of imperial procurators.

Long before the name or fame of Rome had crossed the Mediterranean the Libyan tribesmen had come into close contact with a people distinct from the Romans in blood, language, history, tastes, and ambitions. They were the Phœnicians, the great traders of antiquity, who had ventured from port to port, from island to island, until they had learned to brave the terrors of the high sea, and carried their commerce to

all the shores bathed by its waters. They were the first public carriers of antiquity. The silver, iron, and tin needed by the peoples of the Mediterranean were gotten through them. They were the intermediaries for the arts of Egypt and Assyria, and the spices and jewels of the far Orient. Their own temper was more commercial than artistic, but they quickly appreciated the money value of that love of the beautiful innate even in the savage breast; hence the "arts" of Sidon and the dyes of Tyre were famous even in the days when the Homeric chants were being welded together. They catered to wealth and luxury; set up their wares in the ports of Greece, Italy, Spain, Gaul, and Africa; bought, sold, bartered, and even turned pirates and kidnappers when a fair prize hove in sight, or a beautiful boy or girl lingered too long and lovingly on their galleys, gazing at the wealth of "Ormuzd or of Ind." In time they began to feel the need of fortified sites for their regular markets, and so this wonderful people built its trade-centres all around the coasts of the Mediterranean, while they dared to circumnavigate Africa, and to reach the ports of Brittany by way of the Atlantic.

Their history, outside of their native soil, is

summed up in one word—Carthage. Originally an emporium or factory, such as those in which the Portuguese and the Anglo-Indian empires had their beginnings, Carthage was the daughter of Tyre and Utica (the Old City), in contradistinction to which it became known as the New City (Carthada). The site chosen was admirable—a small hill about two hundred feet high, jutting out upon the wide expanse of ocean, and connected by a ridge of elevated ground with the mountainous mainland. On one side of this ridge lay a vast lake, now a salt-marsh, and on the other a great lagoon, now the harbor of Tunis, but which the skill of these merchant-kings converted early into a double port of great strength. Thus situate between mountains, sea, lake, and fortified harbor, she seemed to defy the world—a very Gibraltar for the protection of the ten thousand galleys that scudded in all directions to and fro from her busy wharves. Carthage was never a military city. The land was originally peacefully bought, and a tribute paid for years to the owners of the soil. When necessity forced her to war with the surrounding tribes, or to protect her trading settlements abroad, she hired mercenaries to do the fighting at the bidding and direction of some great families of the city. Seated

at his counters about the inner port, conversing on his commercial prospects on the Byrsa (or Bozra of his forefathers), or enjoying an elegant ease in his rich villa beneath the shadows of the tall mountains landward, the Carthaginian thought only of balances and credits, of cargoes and lading-space, of mines and factories, of new fields for trade and new objects of commerce. He cared little for history or literature, and, strange to say, though he taught the arts of commerce, luxury, civilization on every shore, his own name has been preserved to us by his enemies. It has been well said that "vast as is the space which the fame of Carthage fills in ancient history, the details of her origin, her rise, her constitution, commerce, arts, and religion are all but unknown." Her libraries were one day disdainfully abandoned to the tender mercies of the Numidian princes, and the only echo of their contents is found in the Jugurtha of Sallust, for whom some of these Punic records were translated before their final disappearance. What we know of the great Punic city is handed down by Greeks like Aristotle and Polybius, or by Romans like Livy. But the former, though liberal and accurate, are not extensive in their treatment, and the latter are biassed by a fierce political animosity, the

natural outcome of that "*bellum maxime omnium memorabile quae unquam gesta sunt*" (Livy, xxi. 1). Diodorus, Appian, Justin, and the lost works of Trogus Pompeius and Theopompus fill out the list of writers who tell us something about Carthage. Strange fate! Though the soil of Africa yields up daily fresh evidences of all kinds to the prosperity of that land under Roman rule, scarcely anything turns up to confirm the reports of former Punic glory. When Scipio Africanus burned the city to the ground (B.C. 146) at the end of the third Punic War, he did his work well, for of the two cities that successively occupied that site there remains but here and there a bit of wall, a broken cistern, a dust of marble and ashes, over which the plough was one day driven and the sacred salt scattered for an eternal malediction. It was reserved for the Père Delattre, that tireless investigator, to discover some long-lost relics of the Punic greatness. They are tombs of uncemented stone, with triangular stone covercles. The brittle dust of the bodies they contain vanishes beneath the first glance, leaving only a few weapons, or objects of luxury, or vessels and lamps destined to contain food and light for the last long journey—the Punic viaticum. There are also many funerary tablets, or *stelae*, dedicated

to Tanit, the great goddess of the Carthaginians, called Juno or Diana by the Romans, and Dea Cœlestis by the Carthaginians. Many a primitive Christian had reason to hate her name. She was mistress of the city, and death was the ordinary penalty of refusing to honor her divinity. These *stelae* are found in thousands, and were doubtless set up on the wall or within the enclosure of the square courts which served the Semitic Phœnicians as temples instead of the round *cellae* of the Greeks and Romans.

No pages of ancient history equal in human interest the relation of the long struggle between Rome and Carthage for the empire of the sea. It is the golden age of Roman virtue, when the frugality and hardihood of the legionaries were equalled by the patriotism and self-sacrifice of the nobles, and municipal devotion was carried to the highest pitch known to history. The military constitution of Carthage was weaker than that of Rome, and her near allies were alien in blood and sympathies and tongue; yet by herculean efforts she rose again and again from crushing defeats, and developed in the stress of adversity marvellous qualities of endurance and recovery, unsuspected in a race of rich farmers and shipping-clerks. But she was unequal to the steady im-

pact of Rome, where the voice of fate and the needs of policy had raised the implacable cry of *Carthago delenda est.* The day came at last, after more than a century of bloody struggle, when the daughter of Tyre, owing to luxury and dissension, went down in disaster, leaving to posterity only her glorious name and such details as her enemies chose to preserve of her municipal splendor and her proud aristocracy, her prosperous colonies and foreign conquests, her island refuges and resting-places, her motley mercenary armies and her costly fleets, her plantations, factories, and mines, her tributes and customs and tolls—the veriest picture of a great modern empire, strong with all its strength and weak with all its weaknesses. Men will never cease, however, to admire the last noble struggle, when, penned up between the mountains and the sea, like a lioness at the mouth of her lair, Carthage gathered herself for a last resistance within her triple landward walls, ready to die, so it might be with such glory as became the great rival of Rome and the ancient lineage of Tyre and Sidon. It is Appian who has preserved the details of the magnificent duel, doubtless from Polybius, for the pages of his narrative bear the traces of the exactness, the calm, unmoved precision of that prince of po-

litical historians. From the hill of Byrsa one may trace yet, book in hand, the outlines of the walls, the place of the tremendous inner rampart, with its stables for elephants and horses, and its barracks for infantry and cavalry. One may see where Scipio drew up his land lines of circumvallation, and shut up on their peninsular rock the last great Semites of Africa. One may yet see, deep under the tideless waters of the gulf, the great rocks of the dike or breakwater built by him to blockade the fleet which the despairing genius of Carthage had built up almost out of her dying members, and for which she had cut, with superhuman exertion, a new exit to the sea. There are yet the outlines of the famous port, the outer one for the merchant ships, and the inner one, with its own high walls, for the war galleys, each in its dock of marble, with roof of stone and pillars of Ionic form, perhaps the noblest marine portico that architect ever designed. There is yet, in the *enceinte* of the inner port, the little island where the admiral from his high tower watched the movement within and without, and the imagination is free to repeople the quays and wharves, the boulevards and squares of the vicinity with every element of Oriental life—physical, economic, and social; moral, political, and religious. It

will still, perhaps, fall far beneath the color, variety, and *brio* of actuality.

In the early spring of B.C. 146, Carthage vanished from the earth. Famine and pestilence had done good work during the preceding winter, but they had not quenched every spark of courage in the hearts of the devoted citizens. Even when the city was captured, they fought on in the three narrow streets that led to the citadel, defending one by one the huge six-story houses that bordered them. For six days the Romans pushed on slowly from roof to roof, or on beams laid over the streets, putting all to the sword, while relays of legionaries dragged away with hooks the heaps of the slain, or took the places of their colleagues wearied with slaughter. The streets were reeking mountains of blood and ashes and human flesh, over which the soldiers drove their horses, and the clarion called again and again to the desperate charge. Only the Fall of Jerusalem recalls such another example of the indomitable resources of Semitic despair. The captured sections were set on fire, to clear the scene of action, and thus at last Scipio stood before the citadel in which were massed some fifty or sixty thousand of the people, scarcely a tenth of the normal population. Life was granted to them. One last act re-

mained in this great human tragedy. Several hundred Roman deserters, with Hasdrubal, the governor of the city, his wife and children, had taken refuge in the Temple of Esculapius. For the former there was no quarter. Yielding to famine, they set fire to the temple, whereupon Hasdrubal rushed forth and surrendered himself. His life was spared; but his brave wife, standing on the highest steps of the temple that overlooked the flaming city, the placid blue sea, and the distant hills, reproached the coward in bitter terms, and immediately cast her children and herself into the devouring flames. Carthage was levelled with the ground; even her suburbs and near allied townships suffered the same fate. The plough was driven over the site of a city older perhaps than Rome, and where but yesterday 700,000 souls drew breath of life. The formal curse was pronounced on it that neither house nor cornfield might ever reappear on the spot. Where the industrious Phœnicians had bustled and trafficked for many hundred years, Roman slaves pastured henceforth the herds of their distant masters. When the remains of the Carthaginian city wall were recently excavated, they were found to be covered with a layer of ashes four or five feet deep, filled with half-charred pieces of wood,

fragments of iron and projectiles,—sad confirmation of the narrative of history. Scipio himself could not repress sentiments of melancholy as he gazed upon the wreck of his fallen enemy, and we are told that the verses of Homer concerning the fall of Troy came to his mind like a presentiment of retribution:

> *Ἔσσεται ἦμαρ ὅταν ποτ' ὀλώλῃ Ἴλιος ἱρή,*
> *Καὶ Πρίαμος καὶ λαὸς ἐυμμελίω Πριάμοιο.*

The Republic was more or less embarrassed by the disappearance of Carthage. It had enough of conquests, and the administration of these waterless plains and treeless mountains seemed a useless item on the budget. Glory and ambition were not so powerful motives as we sometimes imagine among the Romans. One war led to another, one conquest imposed another, and it was rather by political necessity than by free desire that they became masters of the world. For a long time they used a system of little buffer-kingdoms or chieftaincies which had their advantages, but caused infinite trouble by their internal dissensions or velleities of independence. They were eventually obliged to extend their provincial system over all conquered territory. This was soon the case in Africa, where they could trust

neither the Punic population, smarting from defeat and humiliation, nor the restless, capricious, avaricious tribesmen of less than Punic faith. Expedition after expedition was sent out in pursuit of the latter, until all the gorges and passes of Atlas had been traversed, and camps and fortified places built on the southern slopes of these great ranges, in face of the deserts and their oases, so far to the south that their ruins, it is said, are yet in front of every French expedition undertaken in these regions for scientific or military purposes. Little by little the proconsular province of Africa grew beyond the narrow *Africa vetus* that satisfied Scipio, until it came to embrace all the present Tripoli, Tunis, Algeria, and a part of Morocco, and extended in length from the sands of Cyrenaica to the Atlantic, in depth far into the Sahara.

In the division of the provinces between Augustus and the Senate, Africa had fallen to the latter's share, and was governed by a proconsul. But within fifty years Caligula withdrew from that official the command of the regular troops, and at the same time established the province of Numidia, with a legate at its head, in whose hands the civil and military jurisdiction, though distinct in themselves, were placed. The procon-

sulate was still a place of honor, given only to men of senatorial rank, by the Senate, and but for one year. It yielded a salary of some $40,000, though that sum was never sufficient for the expenses of the office. Hence it was usually given only to members of very wealthy and influential families. The legate of Numidia was also chosen from senatorial rank, but by the emperor, and for an indefinite time. Towards the Atlantic a double province of Mauretania was formed, Mauretania Cæsareensis, with Cæsarea or Cherchell for capital, and Mauretania Tingitana, with Tingis or Tangier for seat of government. These latter provinces were governed by procurators, treated as part of the imperial private domain, and had only auxiliary native troops to protect them. The legate or governor of Numidia was thus the chief representative of Roman might and right, more responsible than any other official for order and peace and the general welfare.

Practically, Africa was governed by the soldiers. The African or Numidian legion, in its best days, counted over 6000 men, and with its auxiliary cavalry and infantry made a body of about 12,000. Carthage had its special garrison, and the two Mauretanias were defended by some 15,000 native troops, in all 27,000 men for a much larger terri-

tory than now needs about 48,000 soldiers of the French army. These troops were stationed at the proper posts,—among the disaffected natives, at the entrance to defiles and gorges, in oases, on high table-lands, wherever nature or experience suggested. The French officers have rarely been called upon to better the selections of their predecessors. Every camp was protected by a four-square wall, flanked with square or round towers, and these *castella* or *burgi* were the refuges for the people and their flocks whenever some wild *razzia* swept up from the Sahara or the Soudan. The camps were connected with one another by a system of telegraph towers, on which lights were burned, or elevated and depressed, according to a system of aerial telegraphing. Great roads, heavily macadamized and covered with broad blocks of granite, bound the military stations together, and at the first alarm, horse and infantry were out and away over them, in hot chase of the marauders, ready to traverse half Africa, till they got back the booty or chastised the robbers. In cases of general revolt, when the private vendettas of the Berber chiefs ceased for a moment, legions were hurried over, at great expense, from Spain or Syria, or the Danube. By skilful placing, rapid movements, energy and

daring, knowledge of the soil and the people, and mutual support the commanders of these stationary troops of Africa held the land for centuries.

In military history there is scarcely anything more interesting than the story of the famous legion of Africa, the *Legio Tertia Augusta*, one of the original republican legions, incorporated by Augustus into his ranks, named after him, and, as it seems, especially devoted to the new Cæsar. At his death this legion was located in Africa. At the end of the third century it was still in Africa, and its peculiar life, and the city of Lambesa where it lived, are well worth a few lines in this summary of African conditions under the Empire. Originally located at Tébessa (Theveste), it was eventually removed to Lambesa to ward off the inroads of the tribes of Mount Aurés and the Sahara. Here are yet the vast ruins of its camp, situate on a hillside, close to running water, in full view of the surrounding plains. Its dimensions are over sixteen hundred feet in length and about fourteen hundred in breadth. Like all Roman camps, it was surrounded by a wall, some twelve feet in height, until very lately. Two main roads crossed it at right angles, and at the point of their meeting stand yet the ruined walls

of the marble prætorium. The northern wall is pierced by three doors, the central one of which is quite ornamental, with lateral niches for statues, and military emblems overhead. In the neighborhood are the bases of overturned statues, the walls of baths, halls, and other buildings. In front of the prætorium are the sites of the altar, where the chiefs of the legion examined the auspices, the tribunal where they rendered justice, and the mound of turf from which they harangued the soldiers. The building dates from A.D. 268, and though built during the full decadence of Roman art, and wanting in elegance, preserves much of the ancient majesty. It has been conjectured, from the absence of tiles, that the prætorium was not inhabited. In fact, it was only a great open atrium. The general, with his officers and soldiers, lived about a mile away from the camp, a spot which had once, no doubt, been the site of the *canabae legionis*, or the sutler's quarters, but in time became a municipality, entitling itself proudly *Respublica Lambaesitanorum*. Here are the remains of two fora, a colonnade, a capitolium, elegant temples, porticos, and baths; all the signs, in fact, of peace and luxury, strange equipments for so rude a life as that of a frontier legionary in Africa. *Dux foemina facti.* It had long been a

vexed question whether the wives of the chief officers should be allowed to accompany their husbands to the provinces, and the Senate was often divided as to its propriety, some maintaining that they were causes of disorder in peace and terror in war; others, that they did much more harm when left alone in the city. The question for the common soldiers arose as often as a legion was left in garrison. At the end of the second century Septimius Severus permitted the legionaries to retain their wives. Unions formed during military service, formerly illegal, were now more than tolerated, and the children inscribed in the tribe Pollia. Thus it came about that at Lambesa, as at many other points, a military city arose, about which we have abundant information, owing to the mass of inscriptions with which the ground of the camp and the city is almost littered. From these books of stone we learn the daily life, the history of the legion, the names of its legates and subaltern officers. It had its gala days, such as the visit of Hadrian in the second quarter of the second century. We see that it recruited its ranks from the children born to the soliders, that they were in love with their service, and received abundant pay. We learn of the existence of mutual insurance societies among soldiers and officers, of

pension funds by which the common veteran received as much as $500 on retiring from service, not to speak of his savings from his pay, imperial gifts, and other sources. Every class of subalterns had its own mess, its special *schola*, with its own fund, from which money was forthcoming not only in case of death, but even for journeys to Rome in search of advancement. In a word, the inscriptions of Lambesa permit us to reconstruct with great accuracy the real life and feelings of the common soldier under favorable auspices. Yet his life was far from an idle one. Long wars like that of Tacfarinas and Mazippa in the time of Tiberius, and the endless raids of the never-subdued tribes of the hills and deserts, kept him ever on the alert. He was not in Gaul or Germany, where the enemy was before him, but in Africa, where the enemy lived near by, on all sides, in semi-peaceful relations, but ever ready to swoop down like a hawk upon an unguarded farm, or villa, or town, and carry off booty and captives. The redemption of captives is mentioned in these stone records, and they are thus a strange confirmation of that touching letter of St. Cyprian, in which he tells us of the collection of $4,000 that he took up in his cathedral to redeem Christian brethren who had been carried off in some Berber raids.

It is impossible to travel within the limits of Roman Africa without being struck by the signs of former prosperity. Along the wastes of sand and stretches of thin pasturage, thousands of ruins meet the eye. Here are the sites of great cities, with populations of from twenty to one hundred thousand, towns, villages, and hamlets, once rich and prosperous; there are the outlines of villas, farms, domains. Everywhere are visible evidences of a public and private life of the highest order, columns, plinths, mosaics, inscriptions, tessellated floors and sculptured walls, wells, cisterns, fountains, terraces—all the details of the most cultured existence. In spite of obstacles from men and nature, the Romans made the soil flourish like a paradise, and under them the population grew, the harvests increased, and abundance filled the land as long as the City was herself well governed and prosperous. The nomadic instincts of the people, even of those who were partially civilized and attached to the soil, were a great hindrance at first. There is perfect truth in those verses of Vergil, in which he describes the African shepherd, taking suddenly with him his dog, his arms, his household, and his flocks, and burying himself in the desert:

> "Saepe diem noctemque et totum ex ordine mensem
> Pascitur, itque pecus longa in deserta sine ullis
> Hospitiis, tantum campi jacet!" (Georg. III. 343.)

Long before the Arab and Berber, the Numidian and the Getulian had the same instincts and habits. The Romans managed to curb these wandering tribes, and to fix them in hamlets, which soon became towns, and to widen the margins of arable land, and to increase the belts of orchard and vineyard and olive-grove. When they first came as administrators of the land, it grew little outside of the wild alfa and the dwarf palm, and had much the same aspect and climate as it has to-day. But they treasured the water. They enlarged the natural springs, or discovered new ones, and piped every veinlet of running water. They sheltered the fountains under marble porticoes, and caused their waters to dance in every smallest hamlet over marble steps and terraces, and to fall into great basins for popular use and refreshment. The rich built fountains or repaired or decorated them, and dying, left behind a grateful public whose thankfulness is yet visible in the great slabs of marble on which they inscribed the good deeds of their benefactors. The earth was probed for wells where they were wanting. Cisterns, private and public, were constructed on an enormous scale, and even the sluggish turbid rivers were dammed to make lakes and reservoirs, whose use was prescribed by law, and made known

by public inscriptions set up where all could read them. All that the soil needed was industry and water. The latter they furnished on the largest and most economic scale. Their own energy and hardihood encouraged the native, who found his toil remunerative and ennobling. Pliny has left us a picture, true to-day, of the homely African laborer turning up the soil with his primitive plough-share to which are attached his little ass and his wife. The soil is light, but fertile, and the first rains cause the seeds to sprout and the trees to blossom, and the vines to swell with sap, as nowhere else. The markets were numerous, not only in every city and seaport, but far inland. The domains of private individuals had often their own special markets, authorized by the Senate, where the wheat and the wine and the oil were stored up, somewhat as in the great elevators along the lines of our Northwestern railroads.

The products of Africa were precious, for when Sicily and Sardinia failed to furnish food for the City, the nourishment of its million or more souls fell upon Egypt and Africa. Between them they had to furnish in equal shares two-thirds of the wheat needed for Roman consumption, i.e., over 5,000,000 bushels. Its collection and delivery were entrusted to a special authority, the *prae-*

*fectus annonae,* with procurators and fixed ports, and, in time, special fleets and a special service of sailors. When the corn-fleets were due at Puteoli or Ostia, the citizens crowded the wharves and quays and welcomed from afar the first light galleys that preceded and announced the coming of the *annona* or food supply for the year. The *Annona Sancta* was soon a goddess, with bare shoulder and arms, a crescent upon her forehead, ears of corn in one hand, and cornucopiæ at her feet. She was the patron of the corn and wheat ports, and of the population who lived by the transportation of these cereals. Africa was, in those days, looked on as the soul of the republic, and Juvenal only expressed the feeling of all Rome when he insists that the harvesters of Africa shall be justly dealt with

> "Parce et messoribus illis
> Qui saturant Urbem circo scenaeque vacantem."

After the conquest of Africa many of the original owners of the soil were scattered in slavery, or driven to the fastnesses of the hills. The abandoned lands were sold or given away, and in the early imperial times much of them passed into the hands of the imperial family, by will, or confiscation, or by confusion of the imperial domain with the *ager publicus.* Old Roman families, like the

Lollii and the Arii Antonini, established themselves at an early date on vast *latifundia.* Adventurers and fortunate soldiers took up estates, like the Cromwellians in Ireland, and soon all Roman Africa was in the hands of a few great landlords, who alone had the capital necessary to cultivate the soil and carry on the victualling of Rome. We are told that under Nero six men owned half of Roman Africa, and that he put them all to death, in order to confiscate their lands. The lives of these Roman land-owners were regal in their splendor. A happy chance has revealed to us a fair portrait of their daily life. On the road from Constantine to Sétif, in Algeria, an Arab laborer came across obstructions to his plough which proved to be the ruins of a great bath, some 2600 feet square, with twenty-one large halls, a magnificent atrium, a vast swimming-bath, and all the appurtenances of the most luxurious establishment of the kind. All this grandeur was for the accommodation of one man, but a man of princely estate, with villages and hamlets dependent on him, multitudes of slaves, and a host of agents, bailiffs, and the like.

Among the ruins was discovered a great mosaic, on which figure his house with its domed wings, its central tower and its long lines of outhouses.

Above the house is written the name of this great gentleman, POMPEIANUS. His stables are shown, and the names of his favorite horses are given: *Delicatus*, *Pullentianus*, *Titas*, *Scholasticus*. Of *Altus* he says: "Unus es, ut mons exultas," and of his racer *Polidoxus* he puts down: "Vincas, non vincas, te amamus, Polidoxe." Africa was the paradise of jockeys in the Roman times. They were usually Moors, to the manner born. They learned their trade on such estates as those of Pompeianus, and amassed enormous fortunes at Rome and elsewhere, where the horse-races of the circus were the greatest passion of the people. We have yet odd proofs of this passion in the prayers and imprecations inscribed by the jockeys on plaques of lead and inserted in the curious African tombs through orifices intended for libations or supplications. On the mosaic of Pompeianus are also shown his antelope park and his entire hunting outfit, with the houses of his chief herdsman, chief forester, etc. Not even his lady's arbor is wanting, for she is seen seated beneath a tree, elegantly dressed, with fan in hand, and waited on by a young attendant or admirer. Overhead is written *Filosofi locus*, whether in mild satire or as a compliment, it is not easy to say.

These private estates were surpassed in size and importance by the imperial domains. The latter were called *Saltus,* for they had been originally great stretches of woodland and pasturage, which had maintained their ancient name long after they had become vineyard, olive-grove, and waving fields of wheat and corn. They were like our immense Western ranches. One of them, Enfida, contained some 330,000 acres. They were managed from Carthage by a system of procurators and sublet to *conductores,* who let them out again in small lots, or cultivated them directly, and at the same time extorted from the *coloni* of these domains whatever they could. These *coloni* seem to have been holders of poor or inferior or abandoned lands, for their leases apparently ran on indefinitely, while that of the *conductores* ceased every five years. But the latter were wealthy and oppressed the former, compelling them to work gratuitously beyond the fixed number of days. An inscription found on the site of the *Saltus Burunitanus,* in the valley of the Bagrada, reveals some curious details concerning these imperial estates. It is the history of an appeal to the Emperor Commodus by the *coloni* of the estate against the iniquitous decision of a *procurator* in favor of the *conductores,* and in opposition to a

law of Hadrian fixing the obligatory labor of the *coloni* at six days yearly. Not only do we see here what an army of officials, managers, administrators, notaries, bookkeepers, and the like this great domain employed, but we find in the inscription, put up by the *coloni* in gratitude for a favorable reply, traces to show that the institution of the *colonatus*, or obligatory service of the soil, existed in Africa at the end of the second century, though hitherto it had been supposed to date from the beginning of the fourth. Besides these landed estates, the imperial treasury governed nearly all the known mines of the Roman world. Africa had many of gold, silver, copper, and lead, and to Christians they are of great interest, for we have yet the letters that the Christian martyrs addressed to St. Cyprian from the depths of these sombre galleries, where they froze in winter and roasted in summer, badly fed, badly clothed, but solaced by their devotion to Jesus Christ, and by the letters of bishops like Cyprian, which "made the horrid mountains to bloom like smiling plains, and the frightful stench of the lamps in the galleries to smell like the perfumes of flowers." The mines of Sigus, whence these letters were sent, have not yet been found, but the quarries of Numidian

marble, so precious and famous in imperial times, are still worked as of old. At Chemtou there are yet above ground blocks of marble, quarried over fifteen hundred years ago, with their numbers and marks, showing their destination and the exact shaft or gallery from which they came.

Wherever Rome planted her victorious eagles, she introduced, as a rule, a municipal system similar to her own. In Africa she enlarged the cities of ancient date and built new ones. The Antonines and Severi were the chief promoters of African prosperity; during their reign the cities multiplied, the villages became towns, and the towns developed into municipalities and large colonies. Withal, the work went on slowly. Even Roman Carthage, after the fruitless attempt of the Gracchi to rebuild her, and the more successful one of Julius Cæsar and Augustus, took a long time to reach the rank of third city of the Empire. But the patience and devotion of the Romans worked wonders here as elsewhere, and covered the soil with a network of cities unsurpassed even in Asia Minor for number and wealth. That they were numerous is shown from the fact that in the fifth century the African church had between four and five hundred episco-

pal sees, and their wealth is evidenced by the countless ruins which loom up on all sides. One of these ruined cities attracts in a special manner the archæologist and the historian, for, though utterly overthrown, it still contains the vestiges *in situ* of most of its public buildings. The little city of Timgad, the ancient Thamugadi in Numidia, lies on the road between Batna and Tébessa, a picturesque mass of walls and columns scattered over the slope of one of the foot-hills of Mount Aurés. Close by is a narrow defile in the hills to defend which the site was originally chosen. With the spread of the Roman peace, Timgad ceased to be a fortified castle or burg, and became an open city, perhaps a great market place for the neighboring tribes, for few private houses have been found within its limits. The entrance to these instructive ruins is guarded by an elegant and graceful arch, like that of Septimius Severus at Rome, and we gather from the inscription which once decorated its façade that the town itself owed its origin to the act of Trajan, in the year 100 A.D. In 117 A.D. the principal buildings of the forum were finished, and not too hastily, since after eighteen centuries so much of the work is still standing. The principal street, broad and straight, has been cleared for several hundred

feet, and we may admire the remnants of the solid paving, the sidewalks with their long arched porticoes, the sites of the public fountains and other appurtenances of a luxurious municipal life. The ruts worn in the streets by trade and travel are still visible as we go up to the forum. Passing through a monumental entrance and up a flight of ten steps we stand in this centre of the social and political life of an African city of eighteen centuries ago. It is small, but the ancients did not especially admire our great public squares. They loved to chat together in the forum, to avoid under its porticoes the rain and the sun, to discuss business and politics at the bases of the forest of imperial statues which it contained, to cast dice on the squares inlaid for that purpose on the marble floor of the enclosure. The forum of Timgad had an elevated sidewalk, covered by porticoes supported by elegant columns. One descended by steps into the open space crowded with statues in honor of the imperial family, benefactors, protectors, and notable citizens. On the east side stood the basilica, or Hall of Justice, in the apse of which was probably a colossal statue of the founder Trajan. On the west side stood once a statue of Fortuna Augusta, flanked on one side by the assembly hall of the municipal Curia, and on

the other by a temple, in front of which ran a terrace, interrupting the colonnade of the portico, and from which the public discourses were probably delivered.

The forum was to the African all that the agora ever was to the Greek colonists, the lungs of the body public. This Roman institution entered everywhere into the life of the conquered people, not by force, but by its own charm and its innate suitableness to the life of the ancients. Here was the scene of the activity of whatever elements of political life were left to the vanquished; here their decurions and duumvirs, their ediles and questors and priesthoods met for business or for pleasure; here were to be had such bits of gossip as were wafted from Rome or Antioch or Alexandria or Carthage, with the news of the desert, the movement of crops and harvests, the latest literature, and the last imperial scandal or aristocratic bankruptcy. The worst emperors were hardest on those nearest to them, and the provinces, as a rule, enjoyed peace and security under the head of the state; or if they suffered, it was from causes not always under his control. The imperial authority was welcomed by the old provinces exhausted by republican misrule. The worship of the imperial genius, for a time the chief of

Roman cults, was largely a creation of the provincial instinct, which thereby shared the general glory of the state, and through the local administration of that cult kept up the semblance and the souvenir of national unity. This was especially the case with such cities as Timgad, founded by an emperor, endowed by others with many privileges and gifts, protected against the encroachments of older and neighboring cities. To such the genius of Rome and Augustus was sheltering authority itself, nothing less than the very soul of peace and concord and security. We may well believe that the imperial feasts were celebrated in Timgad with rare magnificence. What a vision of splendor it would have been to stand on the steps of its forum, some emperor's birthday, and watch the crowded streets and inner porticoes; to see the multitudes crushed against the marble columns and the bases of the countless statues; the magistrates in white-embroidered togas amid their lictors and servants; the flower-crowned priests with purple-trimmed garments surrounding their gods and their pledges of divine favor and authority; the bands of handsome young men bearing aloft on tall spears the gilt-bronze busts and medallions of the imperial family; to hear the shrill notes of the trumpets

marshalling the detachments of legionaries from Lambesa and the swarthy Numidian cavalry from the deserts; to behold all that joyous procession, endless in life, color, and motion, move on to the temple of the dead emperors, there to take part in the sacrifices of beeves and sheep, the burning of incense, the heaping of flowers, and the shouts and salutations of adoration!

Whence came the funds that erected these costly edifices? They were mostly paid for by private individuals. In the old Roman world municipal charges were bought by the ambitious, instead of being dearly remunerated by the people. In a prosperous age, like that of the Antonines, men loved the places of trust, and fortunate merchants, soldiers, and adventurers paid gladly the *summa honoraria,* or price of honors, into the public treasury. Their wealth redeemed their base or unfortunate birth, and enabled them to place their children in the highest rank, and to perpetuate, by theatres, basilicas, baths, fountains, and other useful public monuments, their memory. This is one of the causes of the multitude of Latin inscriptions erected by the donors of these monuments, or by the grateful recipients, and which are happily so loquacious that we learn from their lengthy story names,

dates, facts, and institutions that otherwise had perished.

There remain yet at Timgad extensive ruins of the market, the capitol, and the city theatre—all of marble. The market was evidently one of great size and beauty, decorated with statues and inscriptions, provided with fountains and porticoes—an ideal place of business, and capable of relieving the forum in case of great pressure of people. The capitol stood on a little elevation behind the market. To have such a building was the ambition of every city of the Empire. It was the living symbol of unity and peace, and usually contained, besides the statues of Jupiter, Juno, and Minerva, certain rare treasures or heirlooms of value. It was at once temple, treasury, and political centre, and sustained at the ends of the world the religion, the pride, and the courage of the holders of the Roman *imperium* and the representatives of the Roman *majestas*. Its columns, capitals, friezes, and balustrades at Timgad lie buried in the sand and vegetation of centuries, but they are, even in their desolation, eternal witness to the solidity of the Roman State, and the power of arts and letters to overcome the fiercest savagery. Of the theatre, built against the side of the hill, there remain distinct traces,

the sub-basement and broken columns of the façade, with some lines of the stage and the seating-space. The theatre was surely an element of Roman culture, even on the edge of the Sahara, but in practice it could only fire to fever heat the hot blood of the children of the desert. The mimes and pantomimes, the lascivious dances and tableaux and recitations are fortunately gone; the occasional discovery of a mutilated text of some one of these old vaudeville plays is enough to excite the philologians of our day. But the Christian morality of those African fathers who so sternly denounced these excesses still lives and flourishes, after having changed the face of whole worlds and purified entire civilizations. Near by, on another eminence, stand the ruins of a Byzantine fort, lone proof of the brave but vain attempts of Eastern Rome during the sixth and seventh centuries to maintain her African inheritance against Islam. The fanatic Arab, joined by Jew, Moor, and heretic, was too strong for the feeble but dignified Constantinople, and the fate of war gave back to the Semitic Mussulman those deserts and hills which it had once transferred to the Aryan Roman, and which are yet, as they always were and will be, perhaps forever, a bone of contention among the powers of this world.

Perhaps the most exquisite pages in the book of M. Boissier are those on the literature of Roman Africa. Here he is at home, and gives the usual evidence of his fine, intelligent criticism, keen discrimination, and knowledge of the history of Latin literature. The cities of Roman Africa were not without schools, though their ruins are never found, owing to the fact that the ancients held school under the porticoes or on the topmost stories of their houses. Still we know that even small municipalities, like that in which St. Augustine was born, had their schools, and the African inscriptions reveal the love of study among the youth, and the sacrifices made by the parents to provide them with an education. Carthage was of course the chief centre of studies, but the ambitious young men of Africa were restless until they had reached Rome. They seem to have been especially turbulent, for there are laws in the Digests providing for their expulsion from the city when found incorrigible. The Latin literature of Africa began no doubt with the Julian colonists, but we first find traces of it in the life of Septimius Severus, the grandfather of the emperor, whose literary culture Statius extols in the Silvæ (iv. 5, 45):

> "Non sermo poenus, non habitus tibi,
> Externa non mens: Italus, Italus."

Cornelius Fronto and the grammarian Sulpicius Apollinaris were bright lights of the literary circle under the Antonines, but they were, like many others, de-Africanized by long residence at Rome. M. Boissier sees in Apuleius the best type of the African littérateur, and he devotes several skilful pages to the dissection of the literary remains of this author. Apuleius was born on the confines of the Roman province, probably of Numidian or Moorish descent. From his parents, who were people of rank, he inherited about $80,000, which he spent in travel, on teachers, friends, and perhaps in the usual dissipations of classic youth. He picked up his education at Carthage, Athens, and Rome, in which latter city he first learned Latin, a language that he never spoke well. After following for some time the calling of an advocate at Rome he returned to Carthage, where we find him a favorite lecturer or *conférencier* in the theatre, treating especially of philosophy, that *disciplina regalis tam ad bene dicendum quam ad bene vivendum reperta.* Of these public lectures there is extant an anthology called *Florida,* containing extracts on history, philosophy, nature, and practical life. On one of his excursions from Carthage, Apuleius met with a curious adventure that brought him before the courts on a charge of

witchcraft, a reputation which he long enjoyed among the Christians of Africa. To this adventure we owe his *Apologia*, a work filled with garrulous self-complacency and a lively sense of his own superiority. The chief work of Apuleius is his "Metamorphoses," in eleven books, an ethical novel of a fantastic and satirical character, containing the history of a young man accidentally transformed into an ass, which shape he can only lose by the eating of roses. It is written in imitation of a work of that other brilliant declaimer, Lucian. Many stories are inserted in the course of the narration, and especially the myth or popular tale of Cupid and Psyche. The substance of these tales is undoubtedly Greek, or Indo-European; they were surely not collected by Apuleius among the *mapalia* of his African neighbors. They are the same old charming tales found in every land, and their motives are ever the same, whether treated by Petronius and Apuleius, or by Boccaccio and Lafontaine. The former are, indeed, strictly speaking, the only novelists of the classic Latin period, and the difference of their style and language is remarkable. The first is an elegant and refined Latin, whose perfect speech comes naturally to him. He speaks the ordinary language of his well-bred neighbors,

only better than they do. His power of keen and accurate observation, his knack of limning a character or a situation in a few sententious lines, his fine insight into human nature, his regard for historical truth in the delineation of his characters and their discourse, his refined wit and genial humor, prove him a writer of the first rank, and give his obscene Banquet of Trimalchion a right to life that its vileness would otherwise have long since deprived it of. The style of Apuleius, on the contrary, is wildly fantastic and turgid, and his "Metamorphoses" have been well characterized as "an inexhaustible torrent of verbiage, a bewildering medley of classical and popular Latin, the diction of all periods and of all varieties of literature, along with various foreign elements." But the book is full of minute and effective touches, and its constant variation lends a zest to the affected style and the florid bombastic phraseology. For the rest, it is merely the accident of the subject-matter which can cause us to compare the fine Roman gentleman of Nero's time with the African rhetorician of the end of the second century. The Latin was the mother tongue of the Roman novelist, and he wrote it with that exquisite purity which is acquired only by daily converse with the best-bred and the most-refined

society of one's day. But, in the time of Apuleius, Latin literature was no longer the expression of the life, ideals, fancies, or experiences of Roman society. It had grown artificial, the product of the schools of rhetoric, a thing of laws and rules and system, narrow in its choice of subjects, stilted and cold in its treatment of them, without color or freshness or anything of that charming ease and natural simplicity which are the marks of the best productions of the golden age of Latinity. Apuleius, Tertullian, St. Cyprian, Arnobius, Lactantius, all African writers of the best repute, were all rhetoricians. Indeed, from the middle of the second century, all Latin literature is both rhetorical and religious, in a pagan or a Christian sense. But while in Gaul it aims at a certain level and takes on a certain average perfection, it is highly individualized in Africa, where the violent and passionate Tertullian contrasts with the calm and patient St. Cyprian, and the verbose and difficult Apuleius differs so widely from the pure Ciceronian elegance of Lactantius.

Africa produced many poets, but not one who drank deeply of the Pierian spring. Among the African inscriptions there are many in metre, and some of them are quite lengthy. But the African poets as a rule seem to have laughed to scorn the

obstacles of number, quantity, and even accent. Their verses are halt, stiff, defective, and when they are fairly grammatical, are hard and artificial, as shown by the examples in the Latin anthology. Nevertheless the Christian poet, Dracontius, though late in date, deserves more favorable mention. It was his misfortune to live under the Vandal rule, and still worse, to have praised in verse the Roman Emperor. For this he was cast into prison and left to languish in chains and rags. As a solace in his seclusion he composed a "Carmen de Deo," a kind of hymn on the mercy of God, in which there are touching passages and several fine descriptions of natural scenes and sounds. M. Boissier does not mention the metrical "Instructions" and the *Carmen Apologeticum* of Commodianus, perhaps because he does not believe him to be an African, as do many patrologists, because of his Latinity and his use of African writers. These poems, the earliest Christian metrical compositions in Latin, are very rude indeed, and the verse, based sometimes on quantity and sometimes on accent, has only the appearance of the hexameter. But the poems are filled with Christian zeal, in spite of some unorthodox views, and are otherwise worthy of note because of the marked tendency to alliteration, assonance, and

rhyme which they betray. Of Tertullian and St. Cyprian M. Boissier says nothing, doubtless because the plan of his work forbade an exhaustive treatise on African writers, or rather, perhaps, because they are didactic writers, and he aims merely at discussing the African writers of Latin literature in its strictest sense.

Few fields of archæological study have attracted more workers, or furnished a greater harvest than Roman Africa. The brilliant pages of M. Boissier are only the summing up of long years of patient toil, borne by French, German, and Italian scholars. Foremost in this work are the editors of the eighth volume of the *Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum* (Berlin, 1881, in folio), which, with its supplement (*ib.* 1891), contains over twenty thousand inscriptions that throw the clearest light on the details of law, administration, religion, society, and family in northern Africa during a period of several hundred years. They need to be studied by men well versed in Roman history, Latin literature, and archæology, and trained according to the severe historical discipline of the best modern schools. Interpreted by such men, the inscriptions reveal a multitude of facts, and open up whole sections of history formerly unknown or misunderstood. In this line Mommsen, Willmanns,

Renier, Cagnat, Delattre, and others have labored with much success, and laid the scientific foundations for all future progress. Such researches have made possible the great work of Tissot, *La Géographie comparée de la province romaine d'Afrique* (Paris, 1884–1888, 2 vols. in 4°), to which M. Boissier owes the most of his topographical descriptions. Another monumental work constructed on the principles of modern historical research is the *Histoire de l'art dans l'antiquité* of MM. Perrot and Chipiez, which resumes in a scientific way the latest and most reliable discoveries of an artistic nature, within and without the boundaries of the Empire. In the exhaustive studies on *L'Armée Romaine d'Afrique* (Paris, 1892, 3 vols.), M. Réné Cagnat has given us the best monograph on the military administration of that province, and treated exhaustively all the questions to which the huge mass of military inscriptions gives rise. The African histories of Boissier and Mercier, and the scholarly works of Solomon Reinach, Stephen Gsell, Carton, Rouvier, Milvoy, Schmidt, Babelon, Schirmer, and many others, have also contributed much to the elucidation of unsettled problems, while the local archæological societies of Constantine and Oran, with the various *Annuaires, Bulletins, Archives, Rap-*

*ports*, etc., of private and public associations fo archæological purposes, have given shelter to countless details that might easily have been lost to the synthetic gatherer when he appeared. Since nearly all the site of ancient Carthage is now the property of the Catholic Church, it was but meet that one of her priests, Père Delattre, should take an active part in the restoration of the ancient life of that city and the territory where once she reigned as mistress. Though this missionary's work lies chiefly along the lines of the Christian and ecclesiastical archæology of Africa, and of Carthage especially, he is still a very useful and indefatigable helper in the department of Roman and Punic antiquities. In the latter, indeed, he is a pioneer, for the latest discoveries and their illustration are due to him.

M. Boissier's brilliant popularization of these labors and studies, of which I have tried to give the general outlines and the spirit, conveys no adequate notion of the sum of attainments which must be possessed by the actual laborers and gatherers in these fields. To a more than ordinary knowledge of the natural sciences, and to an excellent training in physical and political geography, one must join an accurate and exhaustive knowledge of the local history of the territory in

which he is working—a knowledge which he must often put together himself, since its only materials are precisely the stones, mounds, depressions, and general physical wreckage on which he has fallen. He must have a large endowment of the imaginative faculty—a rare and delicate quality of that gift, which may be used for good or evil ends, but without some share of which no historian ought to undertake the mental reconstruction of a vanished society. To this he must add a hardy bodily constitution, much nervous energy, skill in dealing with the natives, and power to sustain privation, disappointment, and failure. Finally, he needs to be an idealist by temperament, since the worldly reward of such labors is not great in an age when the Punic merchant-soul seems to have awakened to new life, not on the rocky promontories of Africa, but on all the seas and in all the ports of a world which has more than doubled since Carthage was its carrier and its broker.

Such men are truly martyrs of science, and while it is to the honor of France that she produces them in great numbers, it is also a proof that she is still an idealist nation, and that she still prizes above riches and conquests the general ideals of an elevated humanity—glory, learning, art, science, and the unceasing perfection of the mind of man,

that admirable mirror in which he may see the myriad-sided present, the endless vistas of the past, and from the consciousness of the one and the accurate story of the other, forecast the fate of his kind in the similar situations of the future.

# THE COLUMBUS OF THE CATACOMBS.

## I.

John Baptist De Rossi was born at Rome, February 23, 1822, of parents distinguished for station and piety.[1] As a child he loved to read the lives of the saints, especially of the earlier ones, and satisfied his youthful curiosity by long excursions through an Italian *leggendario*, which happened to contain, what is rare in works of pure piety, some account of the authorities or original sources whence the sketches of the saints were drawn. This may have been the original impulse that turned his mind to critico-historical investigations which became at a very early period an absorbing passion. Speaking in later life of

[1] The biographical items for this sketch of the public career of De Rossi are drawn from the Albums or proceedings of the festivities on the occasions respectively of his sixtieth and seventieth birthdays (1882, 1892) and from the brochure *Giovanni Battista de Rossi, Fondatore della Scienza di Archeologia Sacra: Cenni Biografici*, per P. M. Baumgarten (Rome, 1892).

his early days, he was wont to assert that archæology was surely his vocation, since he could not remember that any attraction for other sciences ever asserted itself in him. His studies were made, like those of the other Roman youths, at the Collegio Romano and the Sapienza or Pontifical University. In the former he distinguished himself by aptitude in the study of the classics, never so foreign to the Italian as to the northern mind, and profited no little by the epigraphic instruction of the classic archæologists Secchi and Bonvicini. By a subtle natural instinct he was drawn to the study of epigraphy, for which the materials stared at him from every corner of the old papal stronghold, and we may date from his early college days the growth of that marvellous insight into the spirit and the rules which governed the ancient Romans in the composition and erection of those multitudinous inscriptions whose marble and bronze relics are forever coming to light beneath the pick of the excavator. At the Sapienza he followed the study of law, more for the sake of the position it furnished than with any thought of living by it, and after an exceptionally brilliant course, in which he was always the leader of his class, was declared, in 1843, *doctor utriusque juris ad honorem.*

A mere chance threw him in the way of the famous Mai, and by his influence the young De Rossi was made Scriptor or official copyist to the administration of the Vatican Archives, an office which he held until his death and which enabled him to acquire a valuable acquaintance with a multitude of archæological treasures hidden away most jealously from less fortunate men. In the long years that he spent transcribing, collating, and disposing the rare parchments of that unique collection, his extraordinary memory grasped countless indications that aided him afterwards in his peculiar labors among the *rudera* of Christian antiquity. Surely it was the guiding hand of Providence that set the ambitious and ardent youth, not on the tedious and dangerous road of the diplomatic career, but on the sequestered paths that finally led out among the solitudes of the Appian Way and along the deserted banks of Tiber, where her yellow waves gnaw their tortuous road to the sea. And surely, again, it was a disposition of Providence that kept him a lifetime at the official and professional study of the written records of the past, and absolutely forced upon him the conviction that the written documents were to be used *pari passu* with the material monuments, and that the facts of

Christian antiquity could never be properly illuminated until the combined light of both were cast upon them.

It would seem that in the family of De Rossi the Catacombs were a frequent subject of conversation, and awakened, almost from infancy, an unquenchable curiosity in the mind of John Baptist. We hear that his father eagerly sought the rare work of Antonio Bosio, *Roma Sotterranea*, as a premium for his gifted son, and that the favorite excursion of De Rossi and his brother Michele, when scarcely out of their teens, was out on the lonely wastes of the Campagna, prying around among the entrances to the deserted cemeteries, whither the ancient Christians were tracked like rabbits, or gazing down the *lucernaria* or loopholes that once let in air and light to this subterraneous world, and yet serve as buoys to mark the location of the main pathways across the ocean of ruins that lie beneath. What a fascination there is in this Roman soil! While the grassy mounds and sunken ditches that mark the humble refuges of the early Christian flock were inflaming the piety of the youthful De Rossi, the classical memories of Thrasea Pætus and Helvidius Priscus, of Arnold da Brescia and Cola di Rienzi were firing other Roman youths of the same

age. While the genius of De Rossi was planning the discovery of the little Christian communities, those protoplasms around which the mediæval Christendom was one day compacted, hundreds of his companions were conspiring for the violent restoration of that old republic of blood, iron, and robbery over whose recent grave the first Christians began their memorable propaganda. In this fated city there goes on for evermore a warfare of the spirit and the flesh, and the passionate outcry and reaction of the conquered world break violently in upon the alleluias and litanies of the Church, even as the hoarse shouts of the pagan rabble sullied the holy purity of the Christian service in the bowels of the Campagna.

It was not without some difficulty that De Rossi obtained his father's consent to the indulgence of these antiquarian tastes, which seemed to promise very poor results, either of fame or advancement. In the end, however, he became the disciple of the Padre Marchi, a well-known Jesuit numismatist, whose discovery of the tomb of SS. Protus and Hyacinthus in the catacomb of St. Agnes, on the Nomentan Way, entitles him to an eminent place in the annals of Christian archæology. Still greater gratitude is owing him for the formation of the young De Rossi, long his

inseparable companion and colaborer in those sacred mines whose galleries are hallowed by the blood of martyrs innumerable and the pious foot-falls of pilgrims still more innumerable, and whose walls are impregnated with the holy aspirations of three great epochs of human culture. Padre Marchi was the last of the old line of Christian archæologists which began at the end of the sixteenth century with Macarius, Ciacconio, De Winghe, and Bosio; was continued in the seventeenth in the persons of Fabretti, Boldetti, Buonarotti, Lupi, Marangoni, and Bottari, and in the early decades of this century was represented in France by De Caumont, Didron, Greppo, Raoul-Rochette, Martin, and Cahier; in Germany by Augusti, Binterim, and Münter; in Italy by Sarti and Settele. He was the official guardian, or *custode*, of the catacombs, and, as such, inherited much practical knowledge and traditional lore concerning them. He had himself begun a great work on the monuments of early Christian art, of which only one volume was ever published. Political vicissitudes and his own discovery of the qualities of De Rossi made him abandon the work to his young disciple, who had quickly caught the enthusiasm of the old Jesuit, and brought to the holy cause youth, talent, learning, industry, voca-

tion, and the divine intuitions of genius. The world-famous discoveries of De Rossi in the Catacombs of St. Callixtus—those subtle, almost prophetic calculations by which he laid open a vast and intricate city beneath the vineyards and the garden patches of the Roman suburbs—are too well known to need rehearsal here. Suffice it to say that early in the fifties men recognized a new star in the firmament of learning, and that public attention was thenceforth fastened on the young archæologist as one who had struck out a new path, and would soon modify the methods and conclusions of all past workers in Christian archæology. He interested Pius IX. in his work, and obtained the creation of a special commission for the excavations, in which he was ever the guiding spirit and counsel. All his great publications were begun or planned about this time, and the rest of his life devoted to the elevation of his favorite study to the recognized rank of a true science—one of the few which the Catholic Church can say that she has completely won over to her side.

No one was better known in the great archives and libraries of Europe than De Rossi. Since 1853 he visited frequently the principal collections

of mediæval manuscripts in Italy, France, Germany, Switzerland, and England. The archivists of Berne, Paris, Venice, Milan, and many other cities welcomed his visits and threw open their treasures to the one man in Europe who could compare them intelligently with those of the Vatican and make the old parchments give up the mysteries of the past. So high and unique was his reputation that foreign governments entrusted most precious manuscripts to their representatives at Rome for his use, and deemed themselves honored when he had illustrated their contents or their history. As his fame grew, learned bodies in Europe and America showered honorific titles and memberships on him; orders and crosses and medals were offered for his acceptance; governments, universities, and national academies vied with the papacy to do honor to the founder of the new science of Christian Archæology. His name became a household word throughout Christendom as that of the famous wizard who had conjured up before our eyes long-buried cities, and made the men and women of ancient days move as in a mighty kinetoscope. Among all his distinctions the proudest was that of Prefect, or Curator of the Christian Museum attached to

the Vatican Library—a life office created especially for him by Leo XIII., who was no less his friend and admirer than Pius IX. The latter had offered to put him at the head of the Archives after the unfortunate incident of Theiner, but De Rossi, with characteristic modesty and prudence, begged the Pope to permit him to decline.

In 1882 his sixtieth birthday was celebrated with extraordinary enthusiasm, shared equally by kings and republics, by Catholics and non-Catholics. It recalled those splendid coronation scenes of the Renaissance, when the Italian world burst out in spontaneous apotheosis of the poet who best voiced the multitudinous aspirations of its great heart. Only, instead of on the Capitol, men were gathered at the Lateran; instead of a crown of laurel, they offered conviction and gratitude; instead of the perishable allurements of verse and song, they crowned the hard-won victories of a discoverer who had gone out upon a dark and unknown sea, with only the compass of genius, and given back to the Christian world its earliest provinces that the great cleft of the middle times had forced into a well-nigh mythical obscurity. A similar scene was repeated on the occasion of his seventieth birthday, in April, 1892, when his bust was unveiled in the little fourth-century basilica

of SS. Sixtus and Cæcilia,[1] that rises over the Catacomb of St. Callixtus, amid the plaudits and congratulations of a large assembly, among which were many representatives of the governments and universities of Europe and of academic bodies and learned societies from both sides of the ocean. The learning of two hemispheres bowed down before the humble and honest Christian investigator, and it sends a thrill of enthusiasm through the coldest veins to think that human science was once more doing homage to a model of Christian faith on the blood-stained floor of St. Callixtus, and that our proud century looked not unsympathetically on this new curving of the altitudes of the human mind beneath the sweet servage of Christ.

In modest and touching language the aged archæologist reviewed his work in the catacombs, and thanked the eminent scholars who had come

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[1] The bust, of white Serravezza marble, is the work of Luchetti, and is ornamented with the following inscription:

IOHANNI · BAPTISTAE · DE · ROSSI
QVO · DVCE · CHRISTIANA · VETVSTAS
IN · NOVVM · DECVS · EFFLORVIT
PONTIFICVM · HEROVMQVE · PRIMAEVAE · ECCLESIAE
ILLVXERE · TROPHAEA
NATALI · EIVS · SEPTVAGESIMO
CVLTORES · MARTYRVM · ET · SACRAE · ANTIQVITATIS
MAGISTRO · OPTIMO · P · A · MDCCCXCII

from afar to greet him, and to console his declining years with approval and acceptance of his labors. There is an echo of the *Nunc Dimittis* in the proud joy with which he referred to his numerous progeny of disciples already equipped for work, and ready to occupy the field when the *maestro* laid down his arms. Shortly afterwards he was stricken with paralysis, from which his physical frame never recovered, though his intellect remained undimmed to the last. He had reached a green old age, and enjoyed all the honors that could fall to a scholar's lot. He had shed lustre upon the Church of Rome, both as head of the Christian body and as a local community, and caused the name of *Johannes Baptista De Rossi Romanus* to be pronounced everywhere with veneration and respect. The world was better for his labors, and the spirit of peace and conciliation had made much progress by reason of his commanding genius and all-embracing charity. As his strength failed, it was hoped that the country air would revive him, and Castel Gondolfo, the summer residence of the popes, was placed at his disposal by order of Leo XIII. But he never rallied, and on September 20th he peacefully passed away. His remains were brought back to Rome and temporarily buried at San Lorenzo.

But it is said that a nobler resting-place is in store, and that he will be buried in the papal crypt at St. Callixtus, like a hero on the field of battle. Charlemagne was not more properly entombed beneath the dome of Aix-la-Chapelle, nor Châteaubriand on the wave-beaten rock of St. Malo, than De Rossi will be in the heart of the great Christian cemetery which his genius discovered and rebuilt. He did many difficult things in his life, but nothing to compare with the restoration of *The Cemetery* par excellence, the centre at once of early Christian life at Rome, the nucleus of the landed wealth of the Roman Church, and the mausoleum for a hundred years of her most celebrated pontiffs. He died working, dictating, and commenting, like Irish Columba and English Bede, and his eyes closed upon the pageant of the church militant only to open on that of the church triumphant, whose vicissitudes and memories he had so accurately and piously illustrated upon earth.

> "Nec puer Iliaca quisquam de gente Latinos
> In tantum spe tollet avos; nec Romula quondam
> Ullo se tantum tellus jactabit alumno."

## II.

De Rossi was one of those rare men in whom the entire knowledge of the civilization of the past

ages seems to be mirrored, an encyclopædist or polyhistor, to whom the whole range of human thought and endeavor along the lines of intellectual culture was thoroughly familiar. Before the Renaissance such men were rarer still, for, though the mediæval world produced men of great eminence, whose imprint on human society will never fade, it was still an age of action and creation. It had little leisure or capacity for the calm survey of the classic past and its own origins, and perhaps less taste for cultures that were purely pagan, or at least mixed. There was still a touch of the rugged Tertullian in the mediæval Christian. Therefore we cannot class the great archæologist with St. Thomas or St. Bonaventure or Dante. His place is with men like Peiresc, Sirmond, Maffei, Mabillon, Montfaucon, and their congeners. He is not an artist like those who built the cathedrals of Cologne or Strasburg, but, like Cellini and Francia, a worker in detail, yet with high ideals, and a definite purpose into which every act of his life fits with perfect neatness and propriety. His writings cover the entire period of Græco-Roman civilization, and he was no less familiar with its pagan than with its Christian side. The Rome of Augustus and the Rome of Damasus and Leo were equally well known to

him. During more than fifty years he gave to the public a multitude of writings, great and small, in which he shed new light on Christian antiquities, on the inscriptions of the ancients, both Greek and Latin, both heathen and Christian; on the laws, manners, and habits of Rome; on manuscripts and ancient handwriting; on mediæval art and bibliography. He carried on at the same time a vast system of excavations, organized the Christian Museum of the Lateran, pushed forward the cataloguing of the Vatican archives, and kept a school after the manner of the old philosophers. Indeed, merely to describe intelligently the outlines of his life work is no easy task, and might well occupy the space of one or more large volumes. Still by classifying the numerous works of his pen we may hope to present something like a fair general view of his enormous literary activity.

De Rossi was pre-eminently an epigraphist. The science of inscriptions was his first love; out of his devotion to the *monumenta literata* sprang all his other researches, and to them were finally referred his most striking conquests in the domain of antiquity. Inscriptions engraved, painted, scratched, or stamped; pagan and Christian, public-historical, domestic, and artistic; on stone, bronze,

ivory, wood, or copper; on buildings, coins, or antiquarian objects; whether found on the original materials, patiently gathered from the printed works of the ancients, or dug out of old mediæval collections, he was first in every department, and labored in all with equal intelligence, devotion, and success. Epigraphy, which was formerly but an ancillary science to history, and an armory of apologetic weapons to the Christian, became in his hands an independent study, with proper and peculiar methods, principles, and conclusions of value for themselves.

The passion of inscriptions has been always strong among powerful and cultured peoples, as the modern discoveries in Assyria, Egypt, Persia, and India abundantly testify. Inscriptions were the heralds of Hellenism in its day of pride, as they are to-day the witnesses of the range of its influence. But never were they more numerous than in the palmy days of imperial Rome, when they stared at the citizen from the arches and the statues of the *fora,* and looked down on him from a hundred basilicas and temples in every city of the mighty East-West world. The walls, the roads, the aqueducts; the boundaries of domains, public and private; the seats in the theatres, the weights and measures, the weapons and curios;

the rough marble in blocks and the tiles on the roofs—every material object of public or private life afforded a space, great or small, to the insatiable "man of letters." Public acts, like treaties, alliances, plebiscita, law edicts, senatus-consulta, and imperial constitutions, were eternalized in bronze, while private transactions were preserved with no less care on durable material, as the banker's accounts, the rent rolls, the tavern bills, and political manifestos of Pompeii show us. Sometimes whole annals or biographies were written out on stone, as we see by the Parian *Marmor-chronik* and the famous *Monumentum Ancyranum.* Only one familiar with the texts and details of early imperial history can imagine what a multitudinous mass of inscriptions must have existed intact before the downfall of the ancient culture. But they perished miserably at the hands of those two great enemies of human achievements, cruel man and relentless time. One ground them into the earth, and the other swept away all reminiscences of their ancient estate, so that the same silent desolation spread over those relics of Roman greatness which Rome herself had so often brought upon the greatness of older civilizations than her own. Still they did not perish unheeded. For various reasons the ancients, especially the re-

fined *litterati* of Alexandria, made collections of inscriptions, and such useful and pious labors were carried on by Latin scholars, both pagan and Christian. There are the clearest evidences that such mixed *Corpora* of epigraphical material existed in the West in the fifth and sixth centuries, and that they were favorite books for the compilers of epigrams and the writers of funeral, sacred, or honorary inscriptions. They contained careful transcriptions of many old epigraphs in elegiac, lyric, or epic metre. Often the original lettering was accurately reproduced, and the precious chronological notes or indices of the time when the original was executed were preserved. But even this bridge was in time broken down, and those priceless early collections are represented to us now by manuscripts of the Carolingian epoch, chiefly pilgrim books or itineraries of wandering monks and travellers, who jotted down among other miscellanea out of the older *Corpora*, then worn, decayed, or neglected, such ancient Latin inscriptions as were likely to be of use or interest in their own little circles beyond the Alps.

The merest chance has preserved to us a very few specimens of this literary work in manuscripts that belonged originally to Einsiedeln, Lorsch, Milan, Klosterneuburg, Gottweich, Verdun, etc.

Their text is now corrupt; there are great breaks in them; they are often mutilated, and in the worst possible condition; but they are the invaluable link that connects the modern science of Christian epigraphy with the past, while they are also of importance for the history of the collection of Latin inscriptions in general. It is well known that between the Renaissance of Charlemagne and the Italian Renaissance little or nothing was done for the preservation of the old inscriptions, which cast such rare light on the history, literature, and manners of the society that set them in place. A few names shine out, relieving this long neglect: Rienzi, Poggio Bracciolini, the wonderful Ciriaco di Ancona, and his counterpart in devotion to Christian epigraphy, Petrus Sabinus. But with the Italian Renaissance came an astonishing, if excessive and harmful, awakening of piety toward the old classic world. Its smallest relics and fragments were collected and commented on with a sacred enthusiasm. Humanists and travellers, states and cities, popes and kings and little potentates, collected personally or by commission great numbers of inscriptions, chiefly Latin, and arranged for public or private use a new kind of museum, the lapidary galleries of the Renaissance. The six-

teenth century saw the local gatherers at work, and also the first attempt at a printed collection made by the humanist, Conrad Peutinger, whose name remains attached to one of the most curious documents of antiquity—the *Tabula Peutingerii*, or road map of the Roman Empire. Bankers like the Fuggers, and rulers like Charles V. and Frederick of Austria, caught the contagion, and from that time the collection of inscriptions has gone on with almost unabated vigor. Until very recently a strict line of demarcation was not made by collectors between the pagan and the Christian. Previous to this century, however, the former owe most to the zeal of Apians, Martin Smetius, Scaliger, Muratori, Maffei, and many others too numerous to mention, while the latter owe a deep debt of gratitude to such men as Bosio, Gruter, Sirmond, Doni, Cardinal Francesco Barberini, Suaresius, Gori, Zaccaria, Marini, and Mai, and to the different *custodi* of the catacombs in the eighteenth century.

In the first half of this century Marini, Mai, and Borghesi sustained the honor of the Italian name in the science of epigraphy, but their light pales before that of De Rossi, in whom occasion, genius, industry, and vocation conspired to produce the greatest epigraphist of all time, though

he would himself be the last to deny his debt to the great workers who preceded him, and of whose printed and unprinted collections he made such constant use. It is totally foreign to our purpose to present here the results of his labors as an epigraphist; let it suffice that we give a brief account of the two great works in which can most easily be seen specimens of his peculiar talent and monuments of his industry, the *Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum* and the *Inscriptiones Christianæ*. The former work was often begun in previous centuries, but as often abandoned. In time the French Academy put its hand to the work of collecting all the Latin inscriptions of antiquity, but owing to untoward circumstances laid it aside. Finally the Royal Academy of Berlin took up the difficult task, and has carried it on well-nigh to completion.[1] Early in the fifties it made a formal application to De Rossi for aid in the work, and with the permission and encouragement of the Vatican authorities, he consented. Together with Henzen he edited the sixth volume of the *Corpus*, containing the pagan or non-Christian inscriptions of Rome and Latium,

[1] *Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum, consilio et auctoritate Academiae Litterarum regiæ Borussicae editum*, Berolinii, in folio, vol. i.–xv., 1863–1885; vol. i. of Second Edition, 1893.

and personally made many learned contributions to the entire work. His knowledge of the manuscript collections of inscriptions was of the greatest service at all times, as well as his free access to the Vatican archives, his familiarity with the topography of Rome and the suburbs, and his fine scent in reconstructing, which was the real secret of his genius.

It is not enough to know where the old inscriptions are, in what galleries, museums, archives, books, and manuscripts the originals, whole or fragmentary, and their copies are to be found. Nor is it enough to read the language of the marbles and the bronzes with ease and intelligence. For a great epigraphist it requires something more. Much of the material has come down to us in a very imperfect shape, broken, disjointed, scattered, like the shreds of a letter thrown to the winds. Then there are the forgeries and the interpolations or mutilations to guard against, and the transcription errors of ancient copyists to correct. There are imperfect lines to piece out at the beginning or the end, and words to supply in the context, all of which must be done within certain narrow limits of space or grammar. There are the frequent abbreviations, never quite the same, even in epochs that follow closely upon one

another. The magistracy, the law formulas, the military service, the priesthoods, and the sepulchral system have each their peculiar *sigla* or *literae singulares*, by which commonly recurring notions are most easily expressed. And when all this is mastered, when the text is finally restored, and we can read at last what men once found worthy to say of themselves and their deeds, only a small part of the task is accomplished. There must come a teacher who shall interpret all this, and drawing upon an almost limitless treasure of philological, literary, historical, and artistic lore, cause the cold marble and the hard bronze to speak, and give up the secrets of the men who erected them. The epigraphist must be archæologist at once and antiquarian, lawyer, and philosopher, and be equally at home in the palace and the forum, among the soldiery and the priests, as in the wine-shops of the Suburra and among the motley crowd that surges along the wharves of Tiber. No detail of ancient life, public or private, is useless to him, and out of his enormous collection of facts and observations and readings he is forever drawing the items needed to strengthen a hypothesis or to weld together some long chain of reasoning.

It was precisely here that the wide classical

reading of De Rossi, his fine memory and his systematic arrangement of notes, came to his aid, and enabled him to illustrate his epigraphic texts with a truly marvellous wealth of apposite citations, out of which, again, he knew how to draw the most striking lights upon the question at issue. His profound knowledge of the patristic texts was also of great help to him, since much of the old classic life and thought is imbedded in them. But his superiority to most others lay in two things: the application of the geographical method to the study of the inscriptions, and the skill with which he used every contemporary document of any nature whatsoever when engaged on a text. Quite early in the Renaissance the wise idea had made its way that the inscriptions ought to be arranged in geographical families; i.e., that they ought to be restored as much as possible to those conditions of time and space in which they arose, so as to enable us to hear their natural interpreters—the contemporary and local history, language, and manners—and to reconstruct the actual surroundings of these dumb witnesses of antiquity, that have, indeed, a voice, but for which an artificial throat and an artificial atmosphere must be prepared ere we can hear its tones. As early as 1842 De Rossi had proposed

a return to this system in almost the first work of his juvenile pen, and he lived to see it triumphant in one of the noblest works that have issued from the brain of man, and which includes over one hundred and fifty thousand inscriptions, illustrating, with rarest accuracy, the history of Rome from the earliest days when the treaty with Gabii was painted on shields of bull's hide, down to the hour when the kingly Goth sat as master on the Capitol and bade his brother barbarians spare the records of their fallen ruler.[1]

One turns with pleasure to the *Inscriptiones Christianæ*, in which the second of De Rossi's great epigraphical merits is best illustrated. After all, the classical world is fairly well known and much of its literature has reached us. Its monuments are widely scattered and tell their own story very often. Occasionally entire sections come to the surface, as in Algiers and in Rome itself. Finally, in the popular memory there lives no small share of intelligence of the spirit and the deeds of ancient Rome and her subject world. How different is it with the history of Christianity within the same limits of time! In literature we can boast only of a collection of frag-

[1] J. P. Waltzing: *Le recueil général des inscriptions latines, et l'épigraphie latine depuis cinquante ans.* Louvain, 1892.

ments, precious beyond imagination, but which are only a tithe of what once was, and are oftener the voice of defence and apology than of calm, full exposition of belief. Of monuments, until De Rossi arose, there was the greatest dearth, and among Christians the continuity of race and culture and habitat has been so often broken that outside of the Church herself we cannot look for any vivid consciousness of the remote past. Over the history of the early Church there lies a deep twilight, out of which there loom, vague and indistinct, a few figures and situations. The want of an honest, synthetic view of those primitive days was not felt while the Christian unity was unbroken, but in the last three centuries no lost art has been more keenly deplored than the knowledge of the life and manners of the early Christian world. The value of the inscriptions was always recognized. They were, in fact, one of the earliest forms of Christian literary effort, and the *titulus* put up to St. James of Jerusalem, and the inscribed group of the Hæmorrhoissa, at Paneas, have a claim on our veneration only less than that due to the earliest literary remains of the post-apostolic age.[1]

[1] Cf. Piper: *Einleitung in die monumentale Theologie.* Gotha, 1867.

There seem to have been collections of Christian inscriptions and epigrams before the peace of the Church, and the fact is quite certain for the fourth and fifth centuries. The pious travellers of the Carolingian age preserved much of the material of these old collections, and for a long time their parchments, together with the writings of men like Venantius Fortunatus, Isidore of Seville, Alcuin, and others like Hibernicus Exul, Sedulius Scotus, and the monks of Bobbio, were the only literary sources whence a knowledge of Christian inscriptions could be got. There were the churches, it is true, and the sepulchres of martyrs and confessors and holy bishops and popes; there was also a multitude of inscribed objects over the whole Christian world, but who could visit them all? Outside of a few in the *Liber Pontificalis* of Rome and a larger number in its namesake of Ravenna, we know of no attempt to collect the epitaphs of even a series of bishops. In the later Middle Ages the collecting of Christian inscriptions and epitaphs was almost utterly neglected. Here and there in the annals or chronicles of the time occasional reference is made to inscriptions or epitaphs, but on the whole the science was utterly neglected, though the use of inscriptions was by no means diminished. Not

all the chiefs of the Italian Renaissance were pagan-minded. From its opening some attention was paid to the collecting and commenting of the ancient Christian inscriptions that fell well within the limits of the classic age. Not to speak of earlier attempts, we have large and valuable collections made at the end of the fifteenth century by Ciriaco di Ancona and Petrus Sabinus. Among the great names of the counter-reformation, that of Antonio Bosio must always be held in honor, not alone for his rediscovery of a world of ancient theological evidence, but for his great zeal in copying and collecting all the old Christian inscriptions that he came across. Others followed him, like Doni, Gori, Muratori, Maffei, and Marini, gathering mostly the inscriptions to be found above ground, only rarely adding from the vast stock of those that lay mouldering beneath their feet. It was among these men that appeared the idea of a *Corpus* of Christian inscriptions which should illustrate the ancient Christian life and serve as a weapon of polemic and apologetic warfare. Often planned and begun, it was abandoned as often as the similar enterprise in the province of heathen inscriptions, until the proper man came in the person of De Rossi.

The finest epigraphical training on Roman soil,

an accurate knowledge of Roman topography and of the contents of every Roman gallery and collection, public or private, a consuming passion to piece together the splendid mosaic of the old Christian life, intelligent piety toward the very dust of antiquity, a patient, orderly, persevering mind, a vocation cherished by his earliest surroundings, and a special gift of divination, or moments of lightning-like introspection, in which the *disjecta membra* that lay before him took shape beneath his prophetic glance ere they vanished again into quasi-nothingness, like the old *lucumones* beneath the glaring eye of an Etruscan sun,—such were some of the qualities that this young man of twenty brought to the herculean task that he planned, in part executed, and for the completion of which he has left the materials numbered and ordered like the great blocks of some unfinished Roman palace that encumber even yet the old marble Emporium by the Tiber.

In the science of Christian inscriptions De Rossi towers above all his predecessors by the knowledge of the sources and the superiority of his system. Under his direction the Roman catacombs have yielded thousands of inscriptions, whole or fragmentary, and the sum of Christian epigraphic material has been more than doubled.

He has himself visited innumerable sites above and below ground, and carefully copied the epitaphs, epigrams, dedications, and the like that are found there. The manuscript collections of Christian inscriptions have been catalogued by his skilful hand, numbered according to age and value, their additions to the body of inscriptions noted, and a great deal of valuable incidental information extracted from them for the formation and guidance of the Christian epigraphist. At the same time he was distinguished for his knowledge of all books, museums, correspondence, and men who could in any way throw light on his science. In other words, he had completely mastered the *heuretic* of Christian inscriptions; that is, he had surveyed the world of letters, located the whereabouts of his material, and mapped out the roads and the paths that led to them. Precisely here is the other great merit of De Rossi as an epigraphist. He was a man of method. Not only did he make the most arduous preparations, remote and proximate, for his work, but he invented new principles of procedure, or rehabilitated old ones fallen into desuetude. When we watch the splendid—almost infallible—skill with which he conducts his epigraphic demonstrations, the studied moderation of every

claim until conviction bursts spontaneous from the artful page, the marshalling of every available help, and the broad, serried march of all that sum of fact, suggestion, comparison and parallel—a sentiment of wonder clamors for expression, and we cry out, with the poet, that the art is even greater than the artist.

If chronology and geography are the eyes of history, they are especially serviceable in the science of inscriptions, which are necessarily laconic, compressed, and general in their speech. In the classic inscriptions the data of time and place are very often given, or because of their great numbers and artistic perfection can be calculated from extrinsic and intrinsic comparison. But such means of control are too often wanting in the case of Christian inscriptions, especially of the earlier times. They are rude in execution, long since torn from their surroundings, or scattered amid wreckage of every kind in the catacombs. They are comparatively few, and rarely bear any chronological ear-marks. Many a primitive Christian believed that this world *in maligno positus* was to be of short duration, and that human existence was, at best, but the *mora finis*, a beneficent staying of the divine hand uplifted to strike an unholy mass of corruption.

The enthusiasm of Jesus Christ burned fresh, vivid, and sweet in their breasts, and they longed to be joined with Him whose remembrance alone made tolerable their life amid the seething sin and shame of heathen society. Hence they paid little attention to the aids of human chronology. With their eyes fixed on the celestial bourne, they counted the beginning of life to be the day of release from the prison of the flesh, and there is an echo of that other-world enthusiasm in many ancient acts of the martyrs that begin with *Regnante Domino nostro Jesu Christo,* as though they despised any other pitiful human measure of time. "*Qui saeculo nuntiasse se meminit,*" says St. Cyprian, "*nullum sæculi diem novit, nec tempora terrena jam computat qui aeternitatem de Deo sperat.*" On the other hand, the theological and social value of the Christian inscriptions depends largely on their age, and we are most anxious to know precisely those little items of years, months, and days to which the primitive Christian was so indifferent. Much has been done before De Rossi by earlier Christian epigraphists, but he summed up and greatly increased their results in the first volume of the *Inscriptiones Christianae.*[1] There he sub-

[1] *Inscriptiones Christianæ Urbis Romæ septimo saeculo antiquiores.* Romæ, in folio, vol. i., 1861; vol. ii., pars i.,1888.

mitted nearly fourteen hundred inscriptions, that bear some kind of a date (*nota temporis*), to a rigorous external and internal examination, from the famous Latin tablet of A.D. 71 down to epitaphs and epigrams of the end of the sixth century, the *terminus ad quem* of his great collection. In every case he develops the grave arguments that lead him to attribute a Christian character to the inscription before him and to assign it to a fixed year of the Christian era. In his restitution of the text and in his rich commentary he displays on every page the qualities that ever distinguished him as an epigraphical writer—patient compilation of all the facts, orderly distribution according to immediate importance, vast reading, out of which he drew the newest and aptest parallels and luminous comparisons—those peculiar arguments which are to archæology what the syllogism is to metaphysics. So skilful is the demonstration, so perfect the distribution of lights and shades, so modest the claims for his victorious proofs, that one is tempted to fear that he is being influenced by a kind of personal magic on the part of his author and that he reads through a charmed haze in which objects have no longer their right proportion or color. Only the amount of the new knowledge, the exactness of

the references, the deference paid the writer by great masters of his own art, the natural persuasion of his argument, even his translucent Latin style, that reflects the noble candor of his soul, dispel the impression that such superiority not unnaturally awakens. The first volume of this monumental work contains, besides a long preface on the history of the collections of Christian inscriptions, an exhaustive treatise on the chronological data furnished by the inscribed monuments of Christianity, the eras, the *fasti consulares*, the cycles, solar and lunar, and the indictions. In this masterpiece of difficult erudition he brings together, from all sides, whatever may illustrate the use of these data, not only among Christians but in the surrounding society, and leaves a secure foundation for the labors of all future scholars among these *disjecta membra* of Christian antiquity. The plan of this great work includes all the inscriptions of the *Orbis Christianus* within the first six centuries of our era, taking them as the period when Christianity was conterminous with Græco-Roman culture. In the execution of this plan three dominant ideas are constantly kept in view, viz., the restoration of the inscriptions to their original sites, their chronological sequence, and the apologetic, theological, or antiquarian use

to be derived from them. To satisfy at once the demands of his science and the natural curiosity of the Christian world, he divides his collection into six great parts: I. The inscriptions bearing a certain date (this is the only part finished, and contains some 1374 inscriptions, besides fragments and addenda). II. The public historical and sacred inscriptions and all others which throw light on the doctrine, manner, etc., of the early Christians. III. The inscriptions arranged in geographical and topographical order, by nations, provinces, cities, and cemeteries. IV. Those whose original location is unknown. V. The forged inscriptions and those whose early Christian origin is doubtful. VI. The contemporary inscriptions of the Jews. No doubt much of this vast plan-work was finished by the *maestro* ere he died, but as yet only two huge folios, the first volume and the first part of the second, have appeared. We have already outlined the contents of the initial volume. The published part of the second is entirely taken up with an account of the mediæval manuscript collections of Christian inscriptions. Some of these MSS. date from the Carolingian era, and are sources of incalculable value, not only for the epitaphs, honorary inscriptions, and other epigrammata they

contain, but also for their topographical references to the ancient basilicas, cemeteries, and localities of general interest to Christian pilgrims at Rome. They complete or explain the information already gained from the catacombs or the lapidary galleries, and are themselves illustrated and perfected by the metrical anthologies of the same epoch.

Our Irish forefathers were foremost in the mania for these written remnants of antiquity, and no small part of ancient Christian inscriptional verse is found imbedded in the metrical epigrams of Hibernicus Exul, Sedulius Scotus, the seventh-century monks of Bobbio and others. In this volume we find printed or reprinted a great *Corpus* of old manuscript codices from the eighth to the sixteenth centuries, in which is preserved much epigraphic material otherwise unknown or lost, and which represent the mediæval tradition of this science. These ancient manuscripts needed, indeed, to be reproduced at the head of the second part of the *Inscriptiones Christianæ*, that the world might see what was already known of early Christian inscriptions ere the evidences of the stones themselves were heard. It was all the more necessary, as too often the lapidary remains are mutilated and can only be pieced out by

comparison with their ancient copies yet extant in the manuscripts, or with similar materials scattered through the Carolingian anthologies and itineraries. Only the epigraphists and the intimate friends of De Rossi know what labors this second volume exacted—how many long journeys, vigils, protracted studies, and profound researches it cost to erect this vestibule of the temple of Christian epigraphy, truly grandiose and faultless in its outline. By far the greater part of the material contained in the ancient collections is metrical; hence the utility of the long preface on Christian metrical inscriptions which opens the second volume, and makes a most scholarly page on the origin of Christian poetry. For their models the primitive Christians had the great schoolbook of the Empire—the divine Vergil; and more than one fine *cento*, thoroughly Christian in sentiment, was made up of odds and ends of the Mantuan. Not all the Christians were satisfied with such unadorned expressions of emotion as were conveyed by the *soror carissima, filia dulcissima, vivas in Deo*, etc. Some ambitioned a more resounding phrase, and borrowed with national piety the grave religious lines of their own pure poet, who was able, even after another thousand years, to furnish thoughts and style to a Dante.

That the Greek Christians showed metrical skill in their inscriptions is proven by several examples, notably by the epitaphs of Alexander Antonii, of Pectorius of Autun, and by the now famous Vatican epitaph of Abercius of Hieropolis, in Phrygia. The latter memorial brings us back to the reign of Marcus Aurelius, and shows us a section of the Roman world in the second century, where the Christians could fearlessly put up their funeral tablets by the roadside in a populous province and invoke the protection of Roman law for their immunity. The Christian use of *tituli rhythmici* at Rome and in Roman Africa during the third century is proven from texts pilfered out of Commodian and from the epitaph of the virgin Severa set up at Rome by her deacon-brother Severus. After the peace of the Church the art of the epigraphist was in honor, and the rude scratchings of the fossor gave way to the elegant lettering of a Furius Dionysius Philocalus, while the brief, endearing terms and the touching hatchments of the primitive loculi were cast into the shade by the sculptured sarcophagus and the florid piety of its engraved verse. The flowers of Christian poesy were now cultivated by men like St. Damasus, St. Paulinus of Nola, St. Gregory Nazianzen, and Prudentius, and their sweet petals

scattered over the graves of the dead. The cruel discipline of persecution was at last relaxed and somewhat of earthly attachment makes itself visible in the gentle, loquacious melancholy of these pious epitaphs. Soon they became the rage, and Sidonius Apollinaris speaks of the *naeniae epitaphistarum* as though the art was being overdone. In spite of the decay of letters it lived on, and the literary remains of men like Venantius Fortunatus, Ennodius, and Arator explain the elegance of such sixth-century epitaphs as those of Accia Maria Tulliana, and of the Anicii in old St. Peter's. But the Time of Ignorance came for the peninsula in the seventh and eighth centuries, when the skill of making ordinary Latin verse was lost, and even the Roman Church was satisfied with a rude and heavy prose, while the care of the old metrical traditions was abandoned to the barbarians of Spain, Ireland, England, and Gaul. Isidore and Aldhelm, Bede and Alcuin, Dungal, Shiel of Liège and the men of Bobbio, Hrabanus and Florus and the Goth Theodulf, enshrine in their writings a mass of ancient Christian epitaphs, whole and fragmentary, sacred and mixed. So constant, indeed, is their use of earlier metrical materials out of epigrams, epitaphs, and the like, that it is not easy to say when their verse is na-

tive inspiration and when it is borrowed from some metrical collection of the fifth century, or some scrapbook of a pilgrim just returned from his round of the holy places of Italy and the Orient.

The name of De Rossi is inseparably connected with the Roman catacombs. For fifty years he labored in their depths with holy enthusiasm and rare intelligence. Under his directions the excavations took on a new character, and their results were shortly such as almost to justify the assertion that a new science had been created, and to rehabilitate a long-neglected branch of Christian learning. He was not the discoverer of the underground cemeteries of Rome: long before him, since the close of the sixteenth century, the location of many was known to the Roman authorities and the learned world. Still earlier, the long neglect of these venerable burial-places had been broken in the fourteenth century by odd visits of pious friars, and in the fifteenth by the surreptitious meetings of members of the semi-pagan Roman Academy. Early in the seventeenth century they found a choice spirit capable of illustrating their mysteries and shrewd enough to seize the proper principles for the study of this great complexus of graveyards, in which

time and man had worked almost irreparable havoc. This was Antonio Bosio, a Roman priest of Maltese birth, who devoted thirty-six years of his life to reconnoitring the location, number, and monuments of the catacombs. His great work, *Roma Sotterranea,* was not published till after his death, in 1632–34, and though it created much talk in the world of antiquarians and theologians, there arose no second Bosio to complete the task until the advent of De Rossi. In the meantime relic-hunters and curio-seekers travelled the huge network in every direction, without intelligence or sympathy for the architecture and the paintings, and did unspeakable harm by their reckless excavations and by their neglect to chronicle intelligently what they met with. The catacombs were treated as a huge quarry. Priceless inscriptions were taken away in cartloads and sawed into slabs to pave the Roman churches or inserted in the walls of private houses. Even as late as the early part of this century men like Marini could see epitaphs taken from the most celebrated crypts without asking the excavators for any further details. The corridors, or *ambulacra,* were broken down and clogged up; the *lucernaria,* or shafts for light and air, were choked from above with refuse; rich material

treasures disappeared without leaving any trace; the frescoes were detached from their original site and perished in the transit to the upper air. Nearly every indignity was offered to these holy places in which a Damasus feared to repose even in death. The *custodi* of the last two centuries, and the learned Romans of the early part of this, were active and practical men who spent much time in the old cemeteries, but were chiefly taken up with the research of material for polemics or apologetics or for minor objects of antiquarian interest. Even Padre Marchi, the guide and preceptor of De Rossi, was slow to adopt the new methods which this young man of genius urged on him from 1842.

The method of De Rossi was so simple that we wonder to-day how it did not suggest itself at a much earlier date. It consists in two things—topography and chronology. It was his habit to locate first, with certain helps at his command, the principal cemeteries usually situate along the old Roman roads leading out from the city like the spokes of a wheel. When he had done this, he looked up their history in the books, manuscripts, and traditions at his command. Knowing their site and their history, his next object was to find the historical crypts or the great

chambers in which the most illustrious martyrs were buried and venerated. There was a double reason for this, since, on the one hand, they were the keys to each necropolis, the subterranean *fora* to and from which all corridors finally led; on the other, they were most likely to contain entire the booty of epitaphs, paintings, sculptures, etc., for which he was likewise searching. It was a kind of mimic warfare, in which he directed his first efforts to the capture of the enemy's citadel and chief treasures. Once in a historical crypt, he made the most perfect inventory of its structure, the objects found, and of the process by which he got there. Nothing escaped his practised eye, which read books written largely on walls and floors, where the ordinary observer stumbled or tripped at every step. His inventory made, he turned to a series of valuable documents come down from the Middle Ages, and found, invariably, new light upon the fragments of Christian antiquity that he had so patiently dug up out of the bowels of the earth. Little by little he connected the great crypts, drew up the plan of the connecting corridors, located the staircases that led from one floor of the cemetery to another, fixed the limits of the original burying-place and the successive additions and modifications, gained

the old and the new levels, determined the relative situation of the whole underground structure, with the little churches or basilicas and sepulchres constructed immediately above ground, and took note of the geological formation.[1] It is easier to imagine than to describe the patience, memory, skill, erudition, and self-command needed to carry on at once all these minor lines of one great plan. Whatever may be the difficulties of excavation in the open air, they are vastly increased when the work is carried on beneath the surface, where want of room, light, and fresh air are only the least of the obstacles, and not to be compared with the difficulty of control of workers and objects, the ease with which valuable indications may be skipped, and the constant fear lest the roofs sag, or sudden pits open up, or a ruined wall slide across the toilsome path of the fossor. Only half of his work was done when the topography of a cemetery lay before his eyes pretty much as it looked when the traveller from the Orontes met the pilgrim from the Thames or the Liffey on the marble stairways that led from the richly deco-

[1] Michele de Rossi, the brother of the archæologist, deserves most honorable mention whenever the latter is named. He was for fifty years an invaluable helper to his brother in all things pertaining to the geology, engineering, and architecture of the catacombs.

rated overground basilica to the chief crypts, where lay the embalmed bodies of popes and martyrs, shrouded in gold brocade, entombed in marble sarcophagi, and surrounded by hundreds of venerators, amid the blaze of candles and the grave, sweet chants of the litanies. There was an equally difficult task to perform in fixing the respective dates to which all these things belonged. Independently of theological interests, there was a pressing scientific need that the chronology of the architecture and the art of the catacombs should be accurately determined. Before De Rossi, Bosio had grasped the idea that a true thread in this labyrinth was a correct notion of its topography, and De Rossi acknowledges this with that grateful delight which he always manifests when he can do honor to Bosio's judgment. But to De Rossi alone belongs the merit of fixing a certain chronology for the internal evolution of the cemetery system of Christian Rome. The principle of this chronology is set forth in the first volume of the *Inscriptiones Christianæ*, and consists largely in the process *de notis ad ignota*. He collected the epitaphs that bore a certain date, and noted all their peculiarities. Hence he had a starting-point for similar epitaphs undated, and a first means of determining whether the crypt in

which they were found dated from the second or the sixth century. The inscribed monuments thus classified enabled him to fix approximately the date of the paintings and sculptures on which they are often found, and with which they are often contemporary. The excavations and constructions of the catacombs could also be dated in the same way, since there are naturally the closest relations of time between them and the objects for which they were carried on. Another principle of his chronological method was the restitution, as far as possible, to their original sites, of all the ornaments and epitaphs that once decorated them. This gave him a *point d'appui* for the age of the corridor or crypt, surely as old or older than the monuments found in it. In such intricate and delicate processes the investigators can neglect nothing found on the premises or extracted from a certain class of ancient authors and traditions. Hence the extreme minuteness of the chronological demonstrations of De Rossi. At this remoteness from the early Christian world, and at those depths in the earth, the student is like the traveller lost in the primeval forest, to whom every ray and sound and motion, however faint, are welcome helps. Moreover, he felt that he would never live to finish his great work, and

he chose to leave the most elaborate examples of his method for the instruction of his disciples and as a fund of suggestions useful to future archæologists. Finally, he was an artist in antiquarian work, and he delighted in conquering the difficulties of some obscure date, and in unravelling with finished skill the last intricacies of a knot that lay unopened for centuries.

One charm of De Rossi's writings on the old Christian cemeteries is the skill with which he conducts his investigation on two lines—one the description of the actual condition and the remaining monuments of the cemeteries, and the other the use of a number of old documents, out of which, as out of a magician's hat, he seems to draw an infinity of useful facts that corroborate or illustrate, or fill up crevices or breaks, or serve as guides and finger-posts or danger-signals—in a word, are a kind of *vade mecum*, or familiar demon, which help him out of every tangle. The tombs of the martyrs, and especially the illustrious ones of Rome, excited deep interest from the earliest days. If the statement of the *Liber Pontificalis*—that Anacletus built a *memoria*, or little chapel, over the body of his predecessor, St. Peter—is not absolutely reliable, no one can gainsay the second-century Roman priest, Gaius, when he shows

us the public sepulchres of St. Peter and St. Paul, one on the Ostian Way and the other *in Vaticano.*

We believe that there was a Christian cemetery in the latter place from the very beginning, and that a future time will show some illustrious Christian dead gathered round Peter and Linus and Anacletus under the bronze columns and the matchless dome of the modern basilica. The Roman Church had twenty-four or twenty-five underground cemeteries at the end of the third century —one for every ecclesiastical division or quasi-parish—and no doubt there was a list of them, their administration and expenses, as exact as that kept fifty years earlier by St. Cornelius for his priests, his poor, his widows and orphans. So systematic and precise, so easily bureaucratic is the Roman mind, that it is impossible to conceive that church at any date without archives, catalogues, lists, and all the administrative paraphernalia of a governing body. The persecution of Diocletian burst like a prairie-fire over the Roman Church, and when she emerged, early in the fourth century, there was scarcely a stick of wood or a scrap of writing that remained. In the first three centuries the longest pontifical vacancy was about one year, during the persecution of Decius.

This time the See of Rome seems to have been vacant for six years, nor do we find any traces of that presbyteral government which took charge of church affairs in the time of Decius. There is, therefore, but the faintest hope that any new documents will ever turn up to illustrate the pre-Constantinian period of the ancient cemeteries of Rome. Their place is taken necessarily by late martyrologies, calendars, acts of the martyrs, writings of Popes, historico-liturgical books of the Roman Church, and by old topographies and itineraries come down to us from the Carolingian epoch. Among the old martyrologies the most famous is that known as the Martyrology of St. Jerome (*Martyrologium Hieronymianum*). In its present shape it comes to us from Auxerre, in France, where it underwent considerable remodelling in the sixth century. But it is older than that, and is surely an Italian compilation of the fifth century, out of rare and reliable documents furnished by the churches of Rome, Africa, Palestine, Egypt, and the Orient. No martyrology contains so many names and indications of saints and martyrs of a very early period, and it is of especial value for the study of the catacombs, because it very frequently gives the roads and the cemeteries where they were buried and ven-

erated in the fifth century, while the cemeteries were yet intact. By dint of transcription, however, and through the neglect or ignorance of copyists, the text has become in many places hopelessly corrupt, and the restitution of its dates and local and personal indications has been one of the hardest crosses of ancient and modern church archæologists. Besides its very ancient notices of the cemeteries, this martyrology is of great value as embodying a catalogue of martyrs and basilicas of Rome that surely goes back to the early part of the fifth century, and perhaps a third-century catalogue of the Roman Pontiffs.[1] Several other martyrologies of the eighth and ninth centuries contain valuable references to the martyrs and the cemeteries, especially that known as the *Little Roman* martyrology, and which served as a basis for the well-known compilation of Ado.

Next in importance comes an ancient *Roman Calendar*, published between the years 334–356, written out and illustrated by a certain Furius Dionysius Philocalus, who, doubtless, had no idea that he would one day set wagging the tongues

[1] One of the last works of De Rossi was to prepare, in co-operation with Duchesne, the text of this most tangled and corrupted document for the latest volume of the *Acta Sanctorum* (1894).

of two hemispheres. This calendar contains a list of the Popes, known formerly as the Bucherian Catalogue, from the name of its first editor, and the Liberian, from the Pope with whom it ends. The whole book is now known as the "Chronographer of A.D. 354." Besides this ancient papal catalogue, the book contains an official calendar, civil and astronomical, lunar cycles, and a paschal table calculated to 412, a list of the prefects of Rome (254–354), the only continuous one known, a chronicle of Roman history, the *natalitia Cæsarum,* and other useful contents, which have caused it to be dubbed the *oldest Christian Almanac.* It contains numerous traces of having been drawn up for the use of the Roman Church, and hence the value of two of its documents for the cemeteries. They are, respectively, a list of the entombments of Roman bishops from Lucius to Sylvester (253–335), with the place of their burial, and a *Depositio Martyrum,* or list of the more solemn fixed feasts of the Roman Church, with indications of several famous martyrs and their cemeteries. The importance of all this for the original topography is too clear to need comment. We will only add that closer examination of the ecclesiastical documents of the Chronographer of 354 leaves us persuaded that they date from the

third century and represent the location of the cemeteries at that time and the martyrs whose cult was then most popular.

In the latter half of the fourth century Pope St. Damasus (366–384) did much to beautify the ancient Roman cemeteries and to decorate the tombs of the most illustrious martyrs. As he possessed a fine poetic talent, he composed many elegant inscriptions, which were engraved on large marble slabs by his friend and admirer, Furius Dionysius Philocalus, already known to us as the calligrapher of the preceding document. The lettering used by this remarkable man was very ornamental, and as its exact like is not found before or after, it has been styled the hieratic writing of the catacombs. In time these inscriptions were copied by strangers and inserted in various anthologies and travellers' scrapbooks or portfolios. Many of the original stones perished from various causes, but were piously renewed *in situ* during the sixth century. To these Damasan inscriptions De Rossi owes much, since any fragment of them in a cemetery indicates an historic crypt, and their copies in the manuscripts are links for the construction of the chain of history that connects each great cemetery with the modern investigator.

To the above *fontes*, or sources of information and control, De Rossi added the *historico-liturgical* literature of the Roman Church from the fourth to the eighth centuries—the period in which the bodies of the most celebrated martyrs began to be removed *en masse* from the catacombs, through fear of the marauding Lombards. Such are the *Liber Pontificalis* in its several recensions, the acts of the martyrs, chiefly the Roman ones, the calendars of the Roman Church constructed out of the missals or sacramentaries, the antiphonaries, capitularies of the gospels, and the like, in which not infrequently there are hints and directions concerning the cemeteries and the martyrs of renown who were yet buried there. Finally, the *maestro* extracted almost endless information from the old Roman topographies of travellers and the itineraries of pilgrims. Of the former we possess yet two curious remnants, entitled *Notitiæ regionum urbis Romæ* and *Curiosum urbis Romæ*, as well as a list of oils collected at the shrines of the Roman martyrs by an agent of Queen Theodolinda, and known as the Papyrus of Monza. An old Syriac text of the sixth century and a note of the *innumeræ cellulæ martyrum consecratæ* in the almanac of Polemius Silvius (499) complete the list of strictly topographical authorities. Certain

itineraries of pilgrims from the seventh to the ninth century are not less useful as indicating the names and sites of the cemeteries, whether above or below ground, and what bodies were yet entombed therein, as well as the distances between the cemeteries, and their position relative to the great monuments of the city.

After the middle of the ninth century the historic crypts had been emptied and the bodies brought to Roman churches. Naturally, the written references to the catacombs ceased with the visitors, and a stray chapter in the *Mirabilia Urbis Romæ* or an odd indication in the *Libri Indulgentiarum* kept alive the memory of those holy places which once attracted a world of pilgrims. It is not easy to explain how one of the best of the old itineraries, referable to the seventh century, should have fallen into the hands of William of Malmsbury, and been by him copied into his account of the visit of the Crusaders to Rome under Urban II. Neither is it easy to explain why the old itineraries of Einsiedeln, Würtzburg, and Salzburg make no mention of the tombs of such celebrated Roman martyrs as St. Clement the consul, St. Justin the philosopher, Appollonius the Roman senator, Moses, a famous priest of the time of St. Cornelius, and many other celebrities of the early

Roman Church, who were, in all likelihood, buried in some of the many Roman cemeteries. What the old pilgrims saw they related honestly and faithfully; more they compiled from guides now lost. They were not learned men, but pious travellers, anxious to benefit their successors, and unconsciously enabling us to form some exact idea of the solemn cultus that they once assisted at.

Such, in general, were the means which De Rossi had at hand for the reconstruction of that under-world of Christian Rome. But what pen will relate his patient research in all these old manuscripts and books? Or who can properly estimate the fine ingenuity of cross-examination, by which he laid bare the genesis of his authorities? Scarcely a library in Europe did he leave unvisited in his determination to bring together every scrap of evidence as to the name, site, and monuments of the Roman cemeteries, and his very wanderings diffused a new enthusiasm in every country, and brought new disciples yearly to the modest home beneath the shadow of the Capitol. It would take too long to enumerate all the results of his excavations in the Roman cemeteries. As far as published, they are to be found in the three great folios of his *Roma*

*Sotterranea*[1] and in the *Bulletino di Archeologia Cristiana*. The former includes only the results of work done in St. Callixtus and the little network of crypts and burial-places connected with it.[2] His intention was to take up all the cemeteries in turn, and when death surprised him he was far advanced with the publication of his labors in St. Domitilla. When the cemeteries had been excavated and described, it would be time to think of the great synthetic work that Settele and others

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[1] *La Roma Sotterranea Cristiana*, descritta ed illustrata dal cav. G. B. De Rossi, pubblicata per ordine dell a Santità di N. S. Pio IX. Roma: vol. i., 1864; vol. ii., 1867; vol. iii., 1877.

[2] The most famous of the discoveries in the cemetery of Callixtus are, besides the identification of it, the crypt of Lucina, the Papal crypt, with epitaphs and *loculi* of third-century Popes, the crypt of St. Cecilia, the sepulchre of St. Cornelius, the arenarium of St. Hippolytus, the epitaphs of St. Eusebius and of Severus, and the cemeteries of St. Soteris and St. Balbina, closely connected with that of Callixtus. I forbear to speak here of the paintings and sculptures or of the *varium suppellectile*, the lamps, medals, glasses, ivories, and other sepulchral furniture of the Christians, in all of which St. Callixtus is rich. The prefaces of the *Roma Sotterranea* contain a complete history of the catacombs, their origin and Christian character, their external vicissitudes, the order and method of their construction, their decoration and use as places of worship and the gradual decline of their fame. The results of the excavations, from an artistic and theological view-point, are well summarized in a number of works, notably in the *Roma Sotterranea* of Northcote and Brownlow, and in the *Epitaphs of the Catacombs*, by the same authors.

sighed for, and which he himself looked forward to in his dreams.[1]

## III.

Though De Rossi did not live to finish his *Roma Sotterranea,* he left abundant materials for that purpose in his *Bullettino di Archeologia Cristiana,* a serial publication, which was like a continuous appendix to the two great works we have hitherto been describing. It consists of five series—from

[1] "It seems to me that the local and industrial labors of all Christian archæologists will one day furnish the materials for a gigantic work, more beautiful and useful than could ever be hoped for in any minor synthesis of Christian antiquities. I have in mind an *Orbis Christianus,* illustrated by the monuments of the first six or seven centuries. Suarez in the seventeenth, and Garampi in the eighteenth, sketched a vast work, which should furnish us the series of the bishops of every church of Christendom. I desire to see a great Christian geography, in which the origins of each church, the first traces of the faith in each city and burgh, the proofs of its development and full flowering in every province and nation of the ancient world, shall be collected and disposed in geographical and historical order. That day the smallest shred of an old epitaph, the least bit of an old sculpture, will be witnesses of the highest importance as proving the presence of Christians in such a place and such a century. The very scarcity or even absence of these indications ought to nerve us to fresh research on the lines of history and topography. I hope the day will come when my *Roma Sotterranea* will be but a part of an *Orbe Cristiano Monumentale,* for which both I and other editors of the sacred monuments are but the purveyors of material or builders of particular parts."—*Roma Sott.,* vol. i., p. 82.

1863 to 1894—and is ornamented by a multitude of rare plates, maps, engravings, designs, and inscriptions that are found elsewhere with difficulty or not at all. A complete copy of it is now a rarity.[1] For a time it was regularly translated into French, first by Martigny and then by Duchesne. It is a workshop or storehouse of materials, in which De Rossi laid up countless essays, notes, disquisitions on the written and unwritten monuments and sources of Christian antiquity. There is scarcely a Roman cemetery unmentioned here. Those of Maximus, and Hermes, and Hippolytus, of Generosa, Ciriacus, Peter, and Marcellinus, the Ostriano, and the cemeteries of Callixtus, Balbina, and Agnes have many pages devoted to them, while much of his enormous and entirely novel studies concerning the cemeteries of Domitilla and Priscilla saw the light for the first time in its columns. The overground cemeteries and the suburban ones, as well as the various hypogei and crypts, Jewish and heretical cemeteries, that in the sacred grove of the Fratres Arvales, and even Mithraic grottoes—all find welcome here, where a great fund of observation and suggestion is massed up against future need. Epitaphs and

[1] *Bullettino di Archeologia Cristiana*, del. Cav. Giovanni Battista De Rossi. Roma, 1863–1894 (five series).

inscriptions that in any way throw light on his cemetery work are copied here with extreme care, and largely commented on, whether Roman or foreign; early Christian or mediæval; classic, Damasan, or *graffiti;* opisthograph, forged or defaced.

It is interesting to read on one page an essay on the epigraphic traces of Christianity in Pompeii, on another of the inscriptions that enable us to trace back the Christian character of the Pomponii Græcini and the Acilii Glabriones to the first preaching of the faith in Rome, on a third of the invocations scratched by early Christian sailors on a great rock in the port of Sira, and on a fourth of the epitaphs of the African martyrs of Milevi and Sétif. The ancient Christian memories of SS. Peter and Paul, scattered through the old Roman world, were always dear to De Rossi, and he has noted a great number of them, from the old bronze medallion of the founders of the Roman Church down to the chair of St. Peter, on which there is a long and elegant dissertation. Famous sepulchres in the old Roman churches, like those of Junius Bassus and St. Cyril, drew from the *maestro* a fund of lore on the burial customs of the early Christians, while the origins of the earliest Roman churches exercised always a

special charm on his antiquarian soul. He lingers long and lovingly over the early history of St. Clement and St. Maria in Trastevere, St. Prisca and St. Pudentiana, the basilicas of Domitilla, Petronilla, Nereus and Achilleus, Cosmas and Damian, and the massive old fortress-church of the Quattro Coronati. The fourth century was in many ways a remarkable one in Rome. It saw the gradual transfer of the balance of power, both popular and legal, from pagan to Christian hands—an act which left its impress on the public monuments, like the Arch of Constantine, and in the history of the great Roman families. In the *Bulletino* we seem to watch this struggle as though it took place to-day, and there are few specimens of eloquence more simple and monumental than the essays on the cessation of the priesthood of the *Fratres Arvales*, and the Mithraic cult. On the other hand, we are initiated into some secrets of the wealth and prestige of the Roman Church, when we see how the families of the Aurelii, Flori, Uranii, Dasumii, Petronii, Cæcilii, and Secundi embraced the Christian doctrines and placed at the disposal of the Pope the wealth inherited from long lines of pagan ancestors.

The theologian finds tidbits for himself in the new and unique vindication of Liberius by means

of an epitaph, in the many antiquarian references to the cultus of the Blessed Virgin and to the institution of the consecrated virgins, in the solid inscriptional proofs of the invocation of the saints, the veneration of the martyrs, whose autographs, trials, life in the mines, and proselytizing zeal are all exhibited to us as in a mirror. The lawyer reads with avidity the notes on associations at Rome, on the law covering burials, on the sepulchral jurisdiction of the pagan pontiffs, and of the delimitation of public and private domain. There is strong food for the patrologist in the studies on the *Philosophoumena,* and for the historian in the numerous notices of ancient MSS. and the contents of old archives and libraries.

Here one may find, in distracting confusion, accounts of old archæologists and necrologies of later ones, summaries of standard publications on archæological subjects, and descriptions of Christian museums, notably that of the Lateran. The arts and the artists of the Middle Ages, especially those of Rome, their *biblia pauperum* and their elegant mosaics, their tessellated pavements and the slender grace of their campanili, tempted him at times from the strict limits he had set himself; he even wandered into the preserves of the Renaissance occasionally, and always returned with

fresh laurels, envied by the masters in those departments.

De Rossi kept a watchful eye on the development of Christian antiquarian science the world over. Wherever the Christian faith had left its imprint on a people, there must be more or less evidence of its workings. Thus he followed every find and excavation in Africa, Spain, Egypt, Greece, Sicily, Germany, France, Italy, and the Orient, ever eager to add to the treasures of Christian remains. In this manner the *Bullettino* has become a great thesaurus for the study of early Christian art, and there is many a ravishing page in it on ancient crosses and medals, on rings and spoons with Christian *sigla;* on wine-jars and oil-bottles marked with the cross; on lamps and ornamental fishes; on Christian jewel-boxes and eucharistic plates found as far away as Siberia; on the trinkets of a Christian empress and the collar of a Christian slave; on chalices and medal moulds, combs, bells, fragments of a marble lattice to separate the sexes in church; leaden plaques with exorcisms, and a multitude of odds and ends of a Christian life and culture that have utterly perished save for these traces. Was ever more delicate homage paid to a religion than this pious retracting of the smallest vestiges of the past?

"*La pianta uomo cresce più robusta in Italia che altrove nel mondo,*" says Alfieri, and De Rossi is a proof of it. The same man who delved in the bowels of the earth for the annals of the religious past was also one of the scribes of the Vatican library. Indeed, he was the dean of the little body of those Vatican *Scriptores*, who recall the monastico-literary brotherhoods of the Middle Ages, and the notaries, who have ever surrounded the Bishop of Rome from the very earliest days of Christianity. The cataloguing of the Vatican archives is an almost superhuman task; it has been some centuries in execution. The last six of the great folios, which contain the index as far as it is completed, are the work of De Rossi's hand and brain. I say brain, for it is no small task to read over thousands of manuscripts, often in the most wretched disorder, dispose them, describe them in scientific language, assign them to their proper epoch, note the peculiarities which distinguish them, and the like.[1] That is a work de-

[1] *Codicum Latinorum Bibliothecæ Vaticanæ.* Tomus x., opera et studio J. B. De Rossi, scriptore linguæ latinæ, adjutore Odoardo Marchetti.

Pars i. (Nos. 7245–8066); Pars. ii. (8067–8471). Tomus xi. (8472–9019), operam conferentibus Paolo Scapaticci scriptore linguæ Syriacæ et Al. Vincenzi scriptore linguæ Hebraicæ. Tomus xii. (9020–9445): Tomus xiii. (9446–9849). *Indices*

manding iron nerves and self-control no less than the most varied acquisitions and a critical acumen of the rarest kind. A double series of the Latin and Greek codices has already begun to issue from the Vatican press. Of the former, the Palatine (Heidelberg) manuscripts are the first to be codified in printed form. The two Stevensons, father and son, were charged with the work, and De Rossi has contributed an admirable sketch of the origin, evolution, and strange vicissitudes of the Vatican Library and Archives from the dim dawning of the power of the Bishop of Rome down to the time of Innocent III.[1] The rest of the history of the library has been told by Father Ehrle in his history of its transfer to and return from Avignon, and the story of the Archives in the last three centuries has been amply reviewed by M. Gachard, a Belgian scholar.

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tomorum xi., xii., xiii., codicum Latinorum Bibliothecæ Vaticanæ cura et studio J. B. De Rossi, adjutore Josepho Gatti, Pars I. Index auctorum, etc. Pars. II. Index rerum locorum, hominum, etc. This huge manuscript inventory includes the Latin manuscripts added to the archives since the beginning of this century. Copied in splendid calligraphy, it serves the daily needs of the scholars who come to the archives from all parts of the world.

[1] *De origine, historia, indicibus scrinii et bibliothecæ Sedis Apostolicæ.* Romæ, 1886. Published as preface (pp. i.–cxxxii.) to the first volume of the printed Catalogue of Vatican Latin MSS. (*Bibliotheca Apostolica Vaticana: Codices Latini*).

Few things strike the visitor to Rome more forcibly than the great and solemn mosaics of the Byzantine type which are to be seen in the oldest of the Roman churches. The art of mosaic is a peculiarly Christian product, and, as such, could not fail to engage the attention of such an enthusiast for Christian art as De Rossi. He began and carried on almost to completion the publication, in large folio volumes, of magnificent chromo-lithographs of the Roman Church mosaics prior to the fifteenth century. The collection is entitled *Musaici delle Chiese di Roma.*[1] Already twenty-three numbers of this unequalled work have been issued. Their price, however, puts them beyond the reach of ordinary purses. There is no keener delight for the student of the past than to turn over these wonderful sheets filled with figures of noble gravity. The enthroned Christ, the adoring elders, apostles, and saints, the allegorical lambs, running waters, palms, etc., transport us almost to the gates of paradise. We forget their imperfections for the sublime serenity and recollection of these strange figures that haunt us forever from their station in the apses

[1] *Musaici delle Chiese di Roma anteriori al secolo XV.* Roma Spithöver, 1872–1892. Con testo bilingue, italiano-francese: grandi tavole cromolitografiche (fasciculi i.–xxiii).

or on the façades, confessions, arches, and porches of Rome's oldest basilicas and churches.

The minor writings of De Rossi cover a very wide field. His literary activity was of the most miscellaneous kind, though its objects were by no means heterogeneous; on the contrary, he always kept well within the lines of classic and Christian antiquarian culture.[1] He was one of the mixed commission which brought out the fine edition of the works of Bartolomeo Borghesi, by order of Napoleon III., and his intimate friendship with the great numismatist enabled him to draw from their correspondence much material for the elucidation of the knotty questions concerning the coins and inscriptions treated of in these splendid folios.[2] Valuable contributions from the pen of De Rossi are scattered through dozens of Italian and foreign learned periodicals and newspapers. Gatti counted, in 1892, over three hundred such essays, notes, reviews, and the like, from a few pages in length to full book size. How much more

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[1] His disciple, Prof. Gatti, has drawn up a chronological series of his minor writings, which is to be found in the *Album* of 1892. A full catalogue of all the known works that issued from the pen of De Rossi would fill over twenty-five closely printed folio pages.

[2] *Œuvres Complètes di Bartolomeo Borghesi*, vols. i.–ix. Paris, 1862–1884.

of the kind is scattered throughout his voluminous, well-ordered correspondence of over ten thousand numbers! He was inimitable in the art of presenting the rarest information in terse, clear, and limpid language, without seeking any other pathos than what naturally arose from the statement of unadorned truths, long denied, but at last vindicated. He seemed to have reached at one stride a certain perfection in these antiquarian essays, as any one may see who will compare his early treatises on *The Christian Inscriptions of Carthage* and *On the Christian Monuments that bear the figure of a fish,* with his later *saggi* on the cancellation from an inscription of the name of a vestal virgin become a Christian, on the find of Anglo-Saxon coins in the Roman Forum, on the magnificent *Codex Amiatinus,* or Bible of Ceolfrid, and on the *capsella argentea Africana,* or silver work-box found at Carthage and presented to Leo XIII. by Cardinal Lavigerie.

He was not merely a writer, an excavator, a hunter of Christian curios and oddments. The organizing talent was strong in him. Insensibly he drew men about him and assigned them tasks, by the fulfilment of which they have grown great in the world of letters. He thoroughly understood the value of modern expositions and con-

gresses, and the need of giving forth to the people the safe conclusions of the scholar. At London and Paris he exhibited plans of the catacombs, and would have done the same at Chicago if age and infirmities did not prevent him. The late international scientific congresses of Catholics had no better friend than this old archæologist. He understood well their spirit and their trend, and contributed to those of Paris (1888, 1891) the *primeurs*, or advance sheets, of his studies on the Cemetery of Priscilla, long his favorite field of labor, and in which the holy martyrs finally obtained for him some of the sweetest delights that a Christian scholar can hope to experience.[1] It is scarcely possible to read with dry eyes the narrative of that long pursuit of fifty years crowned with such final success. In his language, bristling with technical terms, there is an intensity of devotion, an impatient directness of zeal, which betray the Christian investigator as he tears off the heart of his mystery the last thin shroudings, and *knows* now what hitherto he firmly believed. There are few higher joys—certainly none more exquisite.

The strained relations between the Vatican and the new governors of Italy gave this quiet scholar

[1] These studies are found in the *Comptes rendus* of the congresses, and in substance in the *Bullettino.*

more than one occasion to do good in a lasting though unostentatious way. Of late years ancient Christian monuments at Rome and elsewhere in Italy have been in great danger of destruction or defacement from the ignorance or ill-will of the actual authorities. The world-wide fame of De Rossi enabled him to interfere on several occasions, and with success, as in the case of the Churches of the Quattro Coronati at Rome and of St. Severano at Naples. It is mainly to his labor and skill that we owe the Christian Museum of the Lateran, one of the most fascinating collections in Europe. The idea, it is true, cropped out frequently during the last century, and various attempts were made to make the Vatican the centre for all such monuments. But under Gregory XVI., and later under Pius IX., the Lateran palace was set aside for this grand enterprise, which was set in motion by Padre Marchi, and has since been conducted by his more illustrious disciple. In this great multitude of ancient Christian objects, nothing is more striking or more valuable than the long lines of Christian epitaphs and inscriptions, arranged in chronological and logical order, and illustrating, with undeniable veracity, the beliefs of the primitive Roman Christians, their discipline, rites, manners,

and habits of life. In 1877 there were known over 15,000 such *monumenta litterata*, whole or broken, and De Rossi then asserted, in a public discourse, that their number grew at the rate of five hundred a year.[1]

De Rossi was never a professor, but one will look in vain for a nearer approach in our day to the old Hellenic teachers or the great scholastics of the Middle Ages, who lived in the tenderest intimacy with their pupils. His real chair was in the depths of the catacombs or in the Lateran galleries, where he practised his ingenious μαιευτική, like Socrates on the banks of the Ilissos or in the streets of Athens, and forced the choicest minds to disengage for themselves the true spiritual realities that lay wrapped up with the fragments of epitaphs and the smoke-stained frescoes of those mysterious cities of the dead. He was always surrounded by a little cosmopolitan circle of men, drawn to Rome by the fame of the great scholar. He met them off-hand in the streets, at home, on his walks, in the catacombs, at the Lateran or at St. Peter's. If teaching be the development of the human faculties through the effusion of acquired information, and the best method and incitement be the simple exhibition of the professor's own

[1] *Il Museo Epigrafico Cristiano Pio-Lateranense.* Roma, 1877.

way of gaining knowledge, then De Rossi was one of the greatest teachers of any age, and the grass-grown ruins of Christian Rome were his Portico. He fastened to himself with hoops of steel men of the extremest religious and national tendencies—Mommsen and Duchesne, Henzen and Bruzza. The English Stevensons and American Frothinghams, Danes, Russians, Austrians, Orientals, came in turn to experience welcome and instruction from this patriarch of Roman antiquities. He was a type of the true broadness and the solidly liberal sentiments of the Roman Catholic Church, which seeks on all sides the eternal truth and holds fast to it in all earnestness and charity. For years he conducted the public meetings of the Society for Christian Archæology [1] and the Venerators

[1] The valuable proceedings of this body of disciples and admirers of De Rossi have been for some years published in the *Bullettino*, and form one of its chief attractions. The monthly meetings of the society usually draw many learned strangers and exercise a salutary influence on the study of Christian antiquities. The *Collegium Cultorum Sanctorum Martyrum* has its seat near the Vatican at the German Campo Santo, where is situate a community of scholars who dwell on the very site that Charlemagne acquired as a burial-place for his Franks who died at Rome. Among the writer's most pleasant souvenirs are the gentle courtesies and kindly helps which he once received from these gentlemen, several of whom are among the best Christian antiquarians of to-day. It would be odious to distinguish, but the names of Monsignori de Waal, Wilpert, and Kirsch deserve a special mention.

of the Holy Martyrs, and during the Roman season he might be heard once a month expounding in the catacombs, or within some ruinous old basilica of historic martyrs, before a motley crowd of sight-seers and pilgrims, the plans, the curiosities, or the history of this weird subterranean world.

"*De sculptore, pictore, fusore, judicare nisi artifex non potest,*" says the younger Pliny. Only one who approached De Rossi in phenomenal acquisitions could fitly judge of him as a *savant.* The preceding pages are some witness to the extent of his antiquarian knowledge, but no mere tale of his writings can convey a just idea of that mind, in which all the treasures of antique and mediæval culture were stored up with order and distinction. He had read every ancient author of the Greek and Latin world, whether pagan or Christian, and properly allocated what each conveyed toward his main object—the illustration of the origins of the Christian Church in the period of Græco-Roman civilization. Before him others had gone over the same field, but none with the same method and the same good fortune in the discovery of the precious wreckage of original monuments. The sum of the written remains of antiquity has been considerably increased in this century by happy finds or skilful restoration. Much light has been

thrown on them—on the one hand by judicious criticism and tireless research, on the other by marvellous discoveries in the Orient—discoveries which do not redound solely to the credit of classic or pagan archæology, but are of priceless worth for early Christian life, literature, and belief. De Rossi was contemporary with most of this progress, and it would not be too bold to say that he was intimately acquainted with every item of it that in any way interested the history of the city of Rome, the catacombs, the ancient Christian literature, and the growth of Christian art.

As an investigator in new provinces of learning he was distinguished by his scientific probity and modesty. He was strictly honest in his method and in its application, never trying to gloss over weak points and never claiming for his arguments a cogency they did not possess. Nor did he attempt to read into his authorities conclusions that they did not justify. On the other hand, he was fearless and frank in maintaining what he recognized as the truth, and did not let himself be frowned down by pompous or malicious ignorance. His style was plain and direct, devoid of ornament—a very model of historic narrative. The fulness of his learning, the aptness of his illustration, the ingenuity of his parallel and com-

ment, lent a strange eloquence to expositions otherwise dry and solemn as a column of figures. The Latin of De Rossi is grave, elegant, translucent, racy. It breathes strong with repressed feeling; it moves like the discourse of a judge, convinced where lies the truth, but anxious to deal fairly with both sides; it is the speech of one bred to the law, but whose mind dwells with delight upon the masterpieces of the golden Latinity. It is the easy, correct, elegantly familiar Latin of the fine Italian scholar, equally removed from the stilted involved speech of his Teuton colleagues and the straight discourse and irreverent brevity of certain English Latinists. Some of the prefaces to his great works will live long in the memories of all who love the large and flowing language of Latium, its superb majesty, its inimitable grace, richness, and precision, its religious gravity, and its memorable annals of conquest, temporal and spiritual. De Rossi was not without his trials, and his labors were at times misrepresented; but he found a firm protector in the Papacy, as is illustrated by more than one little anecdote that circulates among his friends and admirers. An uncharitable controversy pained his heart, contrasted with the sweet religious peace of the holy places in which he spent so many days and nights

among the martyr dead who await the resurrection call. In this respect he was, indeed, *sine felle palumbus*. Though a man of firm Catholic faith, he was supremely amiable and courteous in his dealings with the many who did not share his belief, and among his sincerest mourners are men of the most extreme rationalistic training and views. He was a man of principle, faithful and devoted, known to the inner circle of cosmopolitan Rome as

> "The kindest friend,
> The best condition'd and unwearied spirit
> In doing courtesies, and one in whom
> The ancient Roman honor more appears
> Than any that draws breath in Italy."

Livy says, somewhere, that in studying antiquity the soul becomes antique almost without an effort. And De Rossi had so long studied the growth and vicissitudes of papal Rome that his soul became drenched with loyalty to that race of mighty rulers who carried, and yet carry on within its walls, the government of a world many times greater than had ever ambitioned the proudest Cæsar. The path of earthly honor was open to him had he chosen to abandon the Vatican.

> "U'siede il successor del maggior Piero."

But no temptation could corrupt his fine sense of honor, and he remained until death faithful to the successor of Peter and Fabian and Damasus and Vigilius. His Roman lineage was a matter of just pride to him, and he sat for years in the Roman municipality as the protector of the old local interests of the city and the one scholar-tribune whose veto even the fiercest of the new iconoclasts felt bound to respect. As long as men care for the history of the Eternal City; as long as her basilicas, her cemeteries, her museums, and her varied literature interest them, so long will they recall the gentle and erudite spirit whose magic touch shed a white light upon all the old monuments of Rome, and whose scientific fiat caused the rubbish of ages to disappear, and gave over to the pilgrims of a new time and culture the roads and pathways closed for over a thousand years. Like some great mediæval architects, he finished none of the colossal enterprises that he began; but his methods, example, and principles are perenduring, and have revolutionized archæological studies for many a year to come, while a generation of his youngest disciples will pass away before the *Collectanea* of the master are exhausted.

*Memoria bene redditæ vitæ sempiterna.* There

is a pure, serene, altruism in certain lives whose laborious course has been kept in steady orientation to truth and beauty and goodness. Nor do we need to hear a George Eliot preach,

> "The choir invisible
> Of those immortal dead who live again
> In lives made better by their presence,
> And make undying music in the world,
> Breathing us beauteous order that controls
> With growing sway the growing life of man."

Between the true doctrines of Catholicism and the natural aspirations and convictions of the human heart there is just such a minute, accurate, and catholic congruism as we should expect from the Divine Founder of that religion. Beneficent lives, however short, never melt into the general void, but shed forever a sweet aroma within the circle of their rememberers. This is the basis of the Communion of Saints, and it is broad enough to justify not only the interest of the blessed ones in our lives and their ever-present influences, but also the unbroken operation in human affairs of all choice spirits who have ever uplifted humanity or straightened out its tortuous pathway. So Dante saw (Inf. iv. 116–120) on the greensward outside the air that trembled over the fatal abyss, the pagan just, whose writings and great deeds yet have power to sway the souls of men:

*"In luogo aperto, luminoso, ed alto,*
*Si che veder si potean tutti e quanti,*
*Colà diritto, sopra il verde smalto*
*Mi fur mostrati gli spiriti magni,*
*Che del vederli in me stesso n'esalto."*

Homer and Socrates, and Plato and Aristotle, the martyrs and the doctors, and the great pilot-bishops in the Wandering of the Nations; the liberty and justice-loving Popes and priests of the Middle Ages; the builders of Cologne and the Sainte Chapelle, and the founders of the Italian republics; Dante, and Columbus, and Joan of Arc; Milton and Shakespeare—all these live on forever in the hearts of men, in a sort of earthly apotheosis—household divinities that shield our spiritual hearths from a hundred devastating philosophies and corrupting examples, and preach, in season and out, the lessons of patience, unselfishness, mutual helpfulness, enduring enthusiasm and high idealism—in other words, that pure natural religion which is the basis of Christianity, and which has been so long saturated with the light of the latter that in its upper strata it is scarcely distinguishable from the revelation of Jesus. To this select assembly belongs henceforth John Baptist De Rossi—an example, an inspiration, an index, a complete and rounded specimen of the union of learning and religion. Surely his

many merits won for him a speedy entrance into the heaven he worked for, and we may well believe that the last clouds of ignorance were quickly removed from his noble mind, and that

> "The great Intelligences fair
> That range above our mortal state,
> In circle round the blessed gate,
> Received and gave him welcome there,
>
> "And led him through the blissful climes,
> And show'd him in the fountain fresh
> All knowledge that the sons of flesh
> Shall gather in the cycled times."

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